

**THE RISE OF RADICALIZATION: IS THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT FAILING TO COUNTER INTER-
NATIONAL AND DOMESTIC TERRORISM?**

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THE RISE OF RADICALIZATION: IS THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FAILING TO COUNTER INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC TERRORISM?

Wednesday, July 15, 2015

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
*Washington, DC.***

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:18 a.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Michael T. McCaul [Chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives McCaul, King, Rogers, Miller, Duncan, Perry, Katko, Hurd, Carter, Walker, Loudermilk, McSally, Donovan, Thompson, Sanchez, Jackson Lee, Langevin, Higgins, Richmond, Keating, Payne, Vela, Watson Coleman, Rice, and Torres.

Chairman McCaul. The committee is meeting today to examine the efforts of the United States Government to counter international domestic terrorism. I now recognize myself for an opening statement.

Our Nation is grappling with a new wave of terror from the suburbs of Massachusetts to the streets of South Carolina. We have apprehended a string of assailants who, while living among us, plotted to cause mass harm in the name of their hateful ideology. Just days ago, U.S. authorities disrupted an ISIS-linked plot to attack an American university with assault rifles and improvised explosive devices. The suspect planned to execute students and broadcast it live on the internet. Last month our Nation reacted with horror as another extremist launched an attack on Black worshippers at a Charleston church.

Whether inspired by Islamic terror or white supremacy these assailants share one trait in common: They want to attack the innocent, intimidate our population, and coerce us in order to achieve their ideological and insidious goals. Both international and domestic terrorism and extremist groups are seeking to radicalize our citizens, and they have begun to master social media as a recruitment tool, placing people on a path of violence at an alarming speed. But we cannot bow down in the face of terror, and we must refuse to live at the mercy of fanatics. That is why we are here today: To confront the dangers we face, identify gaps in our defenses, and counter the viral spread of violent extremism.

Americans are worried about a heightened threat environment and for good reason. The numbers are astounding. The number of post-9/11 home-grown terror plots in the United States has surged.

In fact, there have been more U.S.-based terror plots in the first half of 2015 than any full year since 9/11. In particular, Islamist terror groups are on the march. The attack disrupted this week marks the 50th ISIS-linked terror plot against the Western world since early last year and the 12th inside of America. There have been more than 60 ISIS arrests in the last year. That is more than one ISIS arrest per week.

These fanatics have warped a peaceful religion into deceitful propaganda designed to convince vulnerable young people to embrace inhuman barbarism. Their success in recruiting from within our own communities cannot be ignored. Since the beginning of 2014, we have arrested, as I said, more than 60 ISIS-inspired suspects in 19 States. The FBI, according to the director, now says that it has opened ISIS-related investigations in every single State. In just the past few weeks, we have disrupted heinous plots to behead law enforcement officials, to detonate explosives in New York City before the Fourth of July, and to conduct mass shootings of Americans. All the attack plotters were U.S. citizens.

Extremists have also lured hundreds of Americans to try to join them on the battlefield in Syria, and at least one has already returned to our country and was arrested earlier this year while planning a terrorist attack on a United States military base. I commend the FBI and Homeland Security officials and State and locals for disrupting so many of these cases, but we are nowhere near close to reducing the threat. We are living in a new age of peer-to-peer terrorism: 80 percent of the ISIS-inspired Americans who have been arrested were recruited by the terrorist group over social media or gangs in on-line communications sympathetic to it. This is how extremism goes viral, on-line, and out of sight until it is almost too late.

While we spend billions of dollars to detect and disrupt terror attacks, we have dedicated few resources toward combating the radicalization at the root of terror, and that is what countering violent extremism, or CVE, is all about. It is warning communities. It is about helping them spot signs of radicalization, training State and local law enforcement, combating extremist propaganda, and developing off-ramps to radicalization so we have an alternative to simply arresting young people who are preyed upon and recruited by terrorists. This is a crucial prevention aspect of counterterrorism.

Sadly, while extremist recruiters are moving at broadband speed, we are moving at bureaucratic speed. The administration has not appointed a lead agency in charge of CVE and few resources or full-time personnel are even allocated to it. Our committee asked the top agencies responsible for CVE how much money and how many people have been assigned to the problem. They can only identify \$15 million being spent and around 2 dozen people working full-time to combat domestic radicalization. That is it. That means we have arrested twice as many ISIS recruits in the United States this year than there are full-time officials working to prevent ISIS from radicalizing Americans in the first place. In the high-threat environment we are in today, this is unacceptable. Following this hearing today, our committee will take up a bill crafted to elevate, accelerate, and streamline the Department of Homeland

Security's CVE efforts to tackle both international and domestic terrorist recruitment and radicalization.

It is time for us to come together on this issue in a bipartisan fashion. This is not a Republican or Democrat issue. The terrorists don't check our partisan affiliation. Ranking Member Thompson has agreed with me in the past that DHS has a vital role to play in CVE and made a point I find compelling when he said: Prevention is likely to be more cost-effective than surveillance, trials, or wars. I agree.

So, with that, I want to thank the witnesses for joining us. I hope they will illuminate the gaps in our defenses and the importance of ramping up these efforts in this critical time on such a critical issue.

[The statement of Chairman McCaul follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL T. McCAUL

Our Nation is grappling with a new wave of terror.

From the suburbs of Massachusetts to the streets of South Carolina, we have apprehended a string of assailants who—while living among us—plotted to cause mass harm in the name of their hateful ideology.

Just days ago U.S. authorities disrupted an ISIS-linked plot to attack an American university with assault rifles and improvised explosive devices. The suspect planned to execute students and broadcast it live on the internet.

And last month our Nation reacted with horror as another extremist launched an attack on black worshippers in a Charleston church.

Whether inspired by Islamist terror or white supremacy, these assailants share one trait in common: They want to attack the innocent, intimidate our population, and coerce us in order to achieve their insidious goals.

Both international and domestic extremist groups are seeking to radicalize our citizens. And they have begun to master social media as a recruitment tool, placing people on a path to violence at alarming speed.

But we cannot bow down in the face of terror, and we must refuse to live at the mercy of fanatics. That is why we are here today: To confront the dangers we face, identify gaps in our defenses, and counter the viral spread of violent extremism.

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In particular, Islamist terror groups are on the march. The attack disrupted this week marks the 50th ISIS-linked terror plot against the Western world since early last year—and the 12th inside America.

These fanatics have warped a peaceful religion into deceitful propaganda, designed to convince vulnerable young people to embrace inhuman barbarism.

Their success at recruiting from within our own communities cannot be ignored. Since the beginning of 2014, we have arrested or charged more than 60 ISIS-inspired suspects in 19 States, and the FBI says it now has opened ISIS-related investigations in every single State.

In just the past few weeks, we have disrupted heinous plots to behead law enforcement officers, to detonate explosives in New York City, and to conduct mass shootings of Americans. All of the attack plotters were U.S. citizens.

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Eighty percent of the ISIS-inspired Americans who have been arrested were recruited by the terrorist group over social media or engaged in on-line communications sympathetic to it.

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But while we spend billions of dollars to detect and disrupt terror attacks, we have dedicated few resources toward combating the radicalization at the root of terror.

That is what countering violent extremism—or “CVE”—is all about. It is about warning communities, helping them spot signs of radicalization, training State and local law enforcement, combating extremist propaganda, and developing “off-ramps” to radicalization so we have an alternative to simply arresting young people who are preyed upon and recruited by terrorists.

This is the crucial “prevention” aspect of counterterrorism.

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I thank our witnesses for joining us, and I hope they will illuminate the gaps in our defenses and the importance of ramping up our efforts to counter violent extremism.

Chairman McCaul. With that, the Chair now recognizes the Ranking Member.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I thank our witnesses for appearing today.

Last month, in the wake of a domestic terrorist attack on 9 parishioners at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, I sent the Chairman of this committee a letter asking that this committee hold hearings on the threat of domestic terrorism. In that letter, I asked that Federal witnesses be invited to appear before the committee to testify about the threat from domestic terrorism and what the Federal Government is doing to counter the threat of extremist violence.

I believe that this committee has a duty to conduct oversight of the Department of Justice’s and the Department of Homeland Security’s efforts and ask questions about how these threats are identified, mitigated, responded to on domestic terror threats. From my understanding, we invited, from my side, a witness from the Department to come and offer that testimony to us. To date, my understanding is a witness is not forthcoming.

There are also overarching questions about the degree to which Federal efforts to counter extremist violence are focused on domestic terrorist threats. Unfortunately, today’s hearing will not bring us any closer to getting answers to these timely questions, as I said, as none of the Federal Government witnesses are here to testify.

That said, I appreciate the Chairman’s willingness to engage on the subject of domestic terrorism and hold this hearing. I certainly hope that today’s hearing will be the first in a series of hearings on domestic terrorism.

Mr. Chairman, this committee has a history of holding topical hearings. We held hearings in the wake of the Garland, Texas, attack. Last Congress, we were holding hearings during the summer on the humanitarian crisis along the Southwestern Border. We also held hearings on the Ebola crisis. Therefore, it is not surprising that in the wake of the South Carolina shootings, the committee is now holding this hearing.

Given that, addressing domestic terrorist threats is a key element of this committee's bipartisan oversight plan. We should be working on a bipartisan basis to make it a priority. The threat from domestic terrorism is real. According to West Point's Counterterrorism Center, in the decade following the 9/11 attack, right-wing extremist violence resulted in the deaths of 254 people in the United States. Not surprisingly, a recent survey by the Police Executive Research Forum and Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security found that State and local law enforcement personnel are almost twice as worried about the risk of extremist violence by right-wing and anti-Government groups as they are from foreign terrorist organizations. So, for this Congress, every terrorism hearing held at the full committee level has focused exclusively on threats posed by foreign terrorist organizations. Foreign terrorist organizations, such as ISIL and al-Qaeda pose a significant danger to the United States. A number of domestic terror groups also pose significant threats. Unless we get serious about domestic terrorism, we run the risk of falling victim to what the 9/11 Commissioners call a failure of imagination.

Like foreign terrorist organizations, domestic terrorist organizations vigorously recruit and spread propaganda through social media and in on-line chat rooms. Every day foreign terrorist organizations dispatch thousands of messages on-line to promote their violent terrorist ideology, domestic terrorist organizations do so as well. Over the past few years, sovereign citizen group and other anti-Government groups have successfully recruited new members through Facebook as well as extremist websites NewSaxon and Stormfront. Interestingly, in the past, whenever we have discussed overseas-based threats, there has been an almost exclusive focus on propaganda circulated by foreign terrorist organizations.

However, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, Stormfront posts their forums in over a dozen languages, and nearly half its traffic comes from outside the United States.

Mr. Chairman, I agree with your statement. We are facing an enemy whose messages and calls to violence are posted and promoted in real time. Last month, on U.S. soil, approximately 500 miles from the Capitol, we saw first-hand how chat rooms and the internet can spur acts of extremist violence by domestic terrorists when a man identified as 21-year-old Dylann Roof massacred 9 Black Christians in the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church. Three days after the shooting, a racist manifesto, allegedly written by Roof surfaced on-line. In this manifesto, Roof admitted to gathering information from the Council of Conservative Citizens, a well-known extremist group that has roots with the White Citizens' Councils, an associated network of White supremacists. Photographs of the alleged perpetrator with oppressive sym-

bols of the Confederacy and the South African apartheid regime also surfaced on-line in the wake of the shooting.

Even though the deadly attack in South Carolina is at the forefront of our minds, we cannot forget the fall of 2008 attempt to assassinate President Obama that was planned by two white supremacists who were allegedly introduced on a social networking website. It is important that we find ways to counter violent extremism from both domestic and foreign terrorist organizations. The administration has tried to pursue this avenue, but unfortunately, we are still unclear on what is being done, particularly at DHS.

DHS refuses to provide testimony to date, and without hearing directly from the agency about its vision and needs, I cannot support H.R. 2899, the legislation this committee is poised to consider later today. I cannot embrace the bureaucratic solution that Chairman McCaul is offering to the Homeland Security's challenge of extremist violence. We all have a responsibility to prevent terrorist attacks against Americans and on American soil, and our actions should respond to the current threat environment. Not doing so would be a disservice to ourselves and the American public.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman McCaul. I thank the Ranking Member.

Let me voice my disappointment that the Ranking Member is not supportive. I held this hearing in response to your letter. The Department witness, you are correct, is not here. But this hearing is entitled both to counter international and domestic terrorism—domestic terrorism. The bill that we are going to mark up later today, I would argue, almost expands the scope within the Department to not be faced solely on international foreign terrorism but domestic in response to the shootings in South Carolina.

So I am a little bit perplexed at the position of the Minority side as to why they are not supportive of both the hearing and the legislation that we are going to bring forward later today.

So, with that, I would like to introduce our witnesses. First, Ms. Farah Pandith, currently an adjunct senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, senior fellow at Harvard University's Future of Diplomacy Project at the Kennedy School and, as of May 2015, a member of the Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson's Homeland Security Advisory Council. She previously served as a political appointee in the Bush administration and also the Obama administration. She was appointed the first-ever special representative to Muslim communities in June 2009 by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Next, we have Mr. Seamus Hughes, serves as the deputy director of the Program on Extremism at George Washington University Center for Cyber and Homeland Security. Previously, Mr. Hughes worked as a lead countering violent extremism staffer at the National Counterterrorism Center and as senior adviser for the U.S. Senate Homeland Security Committee.

Last, we have Mr. Richard Cohen, currently an attorney and president of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Prior to joining the law center as president, he served as its vice president for programs, which includes the Intelligence Project and Teaching Tolerance, and practiced law in Washington for many years.

So I want to thank all the witnesses for being here today. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Pandith for her testimony.

**STATEMENT OF FARAH PANDITH, ADJUNCT SENIOR FELLOW,
COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS**

Ms. PANDITH. Good morning. Thank you to the House Committee on Homeland Security for inviting me to testify today. Chairman McCaul, and Members of the committee, it is my honor and pleasure to be here for this important discussion.

My name is Farah Pandith, and I am an adjunct senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and a senior fellow at Harvard University. My opinions are my own.

My perspective is based on more than a decade directly working on issues of countering violent extremism while I was in Government serving at the National Security Council and at the Department of State as a political appointee for Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

In my roles, most recently as special representative to Muslim communities, I focused on the impact of extremist ideologies on Muslim millennials. I engaged with communities at a grassroots level in more than 80 countries. In the Bush and Obama administrations, I pioneered efforts to push back on these ideologies on-line and off-line and saw the complex processes by which extremists prey on young Muslims, tear apart local communities, and threaten stability world-wide. Their ideology was present in every country I visited, and the domestic and international implications of this fact are playing out as we speak.

Thus, I am pleased to be able to talk with you about what the United States Government has done and what we need to do to deal with the threat we face from extremist groups that use a corrupt and vile narrative claiming religious credentials for their political and ideological ends. In my submitted written testimony, I have argued that while our Nation has been aware that an ideological element is fueling the radicalization of Muslim youth, we have not yet employed an all-in strategy of hard and soft power.

When we do this, we will see positive results, including a decrease in the number of recruits.

The title of the hearing today asks if the United States Government is failing to counter terrorism. We know that without recruits, terrorist organizations can't survive. Therefore, is the American Government doing enough to stop the recruitment of young Muslims in our country and abroad? At worst, the answer is no. At best, the answer is, it depends. If we assess progress in terms of how many other 9/11s have happened on our soil, we have so far succeeded. If we assess progress that the number of Americans doing harm in the homeland in support of groups like ISIL compared to in support of other causes, we have so far succeeded. If we assess the progress as the number of American foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq compared to other Western foreign fighters, we have so far succeeded.

But these measurements of success do not go far enough because we can't just look at the present. We must look at what we are doing to prevent the rise of radicalization in youth for years to come. This means the seeming success we have had will prove illu-

sory over the longer term because we know that the ideology of the extremist is impacting kids as young as 10. These children and young adults will continue the cycle of violence and fear. The extremists are winning over youth from Detroit to Dhaka. They have a sophisticated, well-funded machine that is working 24/7 to persuade and provoke youth to be part of their team.

The threat posed by extremists is comprised of the construction of physical and virtual armies. This is a far more worrisome threat than just a particular group because the attractiveness of this ideology and the tactics of recruitment have infiltrated a demographic the world over. We have not created the kind of machinery inside and outside of Government that can compete with the extremists at this moment. We have failed to give the right resources, commitment, and personnel to this century-changing phenomenon. Too little has happened to address the seeding of the ecosystem that has allowed the poisonous ideology to grow over several decades. Too little has been done to deal with a post-9/11 generational identity crisis that makes recruitment possible.

The fact is, based on the thousands of conversations I have had with Muslim millennials globally, they are searching for answers to questions about their identity. Extremist narratives are filling the intellectual vacuum, and governments have been ill-equipped to deal with it.

I know this might seem like gushy stuff. Government doesn't do identity crises very well. Still, we must reposition ourselves to confront the real issue facing us today, not the issue we wish we were facing. At one time, just a few years ago, al-Qaeda was the big threat. Today, that threat feels manageable in comparison with ISIL.

What threat will we face tomorrow? What happens if there are more than one ISIL at the same time? If we want to create a new reality for our Nation and the world, we must go all in. We must confront the ideological threat with a strategy that reduces the number of recruits and prevents the virtual armies from being formed. I want to conclude with five points that should be part of our repositioning.

First, focus directly on the global millennial generation, both men and women. Use digital natives to dramatically change the patterns of discourse within the Muslim communities. No. 3, invest significantly in soft power, not just hard power. The strategy must be integrated together, and we must go all in. No. 4, be concerned not just with individuals who leave home countries to fight in the Middle East or elsewhere but with the ideology that continues to spread among those left behind. Finally, fight extremism with a well-resourced team, the right personnel, a substantially-increased budget for soft power funding, and an entity in charge of the ideological fight that is accountable to Congress.

Thank you very much for the opportunity, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Pandith follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FARAH PANDITH

JULY 15, 2015

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the committee: Thank you for inviting me to share my perspective and experience. My name is Farah Pandith, and for 11 years I served as a political appointee for Presidents George W. Bush and Barack H. Obama, most recently as our Government's former first-ever special representative to Muslim communities. I felt deeply honored to serve our Nation at the highest levels in a post-9/11 environment and to work on an issue that is, in my opinion, one of this century's most serious and misunderstood.

I left Government in January 2014 to continue my work on countering violent extremism. I greatly respect both administrations in which I have served, but given what I have seen in more than 80 countries as special representative, as well as in 55 cities and 19 countries across western Europe as senior advisor to the assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs focusing specifically on countering violent extremism (CVE), I felt it was important to re-join the non-Government sector so as to speak openly, clearly, and pointedly about the threat we are facing. I also wanted to help convince America and the world to do more to confront extremist ideology. (Let me be clear: Many kinds of extremist ideologies exist on our planet today. I'm referring to extremists whose vile and corrupt narrative claims religion for a specific political and ideological end.)

I come before you with neither a partisan agenda nor any purpose other than to give my honest views on this vital issue. As of February 2014, I have been affiliated with Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government where I maintain an affiliation. As of December 2014, I have been at the Council on Foreign Relations. The opinions I am expressing in both my written and verbal testimony are my own. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the issue of the "Rise of Radicalization: Is the U.S. Government Failing to Counter International and Domestic Terrorism?"

WHAT THREAT DO WE FACE?

War of Ideas: the ideology of the extremists versus everyone else

Extremist ideology is an insidious and contagious virus that has successfully moved across our planet, specifically targeting Muslim millennials. Although extremism is not a new threat, it has infected every region of the globe and continues to morph, taking on different forms in different places. Yet the result is always the same: Massive loss of life, destruction of modern cities and ancient sites, the seizure of territory, the erasure of existing borders, the targeted culling of minorities, the destabilization of entire regions, and the eradication of human rights.

The War of Ideas today is far more deadly than it was in the years after 9/11 because the recruits—mainly Muslim millennials under the age of 30—are vulnerable to persuasion, purpose, and passion. More youth are becoming radicalized globally, enticed to join both virtual and physical armies. The extremists are outpacing and outmaneuvering us in the ideological space. To stop them, we must take courageous and intelligent action, applying known methods and deploying all of our tools, both hard and soft power. Unless we act decisively, surpassing what we've done since 9/11 to inoculate communities from Denver to Dhaka, we will face an even more serious situation globally. We are currently "just" primarily seeing the crisis of the Middle East but one can imagine a terrifying situation where this kind of war is being fought in other theatres at the same time as well as an expanded and more frequent series of attacks from Stockholm to Sidney.

Vulnerable Communities: Listening to what the grassroots have to say

The extremists—whether al-Qaeda, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), al-Shabaab, the Taliban, or Boko Haram—understand that in order to gain recruits, they must cater to their target demographic. The extremists are winning recruits because right now their narratives are louder and reach more youth than any other. At the core, extremist narratives are answering the key questions millennial Muslims are asking about themselves and their purpose.

As special representative to Muslim communities, I met with thousands of Muslims over 5 years. I engaged with communities from Brazil to China, heard stories, and developed a new perspective on trends relating to Muslim youth. I had done this in Europe for 2 years right after the Danish Cartoon Crisis, talking with members of communities from Norway to Sicily and thinking that what I heard was unique to Muslims living as a minority (I was wrong). These two roles gave me unprecedented grassroots access in places senior U.S. Government rarely went. They provided me with an extraordinary ability to make connections and spot trends

across a demographic rather than just a region, and to do so irrespective of who was in the Oval Office. (Again, I did this in both the Bush and Obama administrations).

The realities I encountered flew in the face of all the theories and seemingly logical explanations then circulating about extremism. Experts cited the so-called Arab Spring, the lack of jobs and education, our foreign policy, our domestic policies, our immigrant narrative, our separation of church and state. Yet what young Muslim men and women were confronting—and still are confronting—was different and more unwieldy. Since 9/11, Muslim youth have experienced a profound identity crisis unlike any in modern history. They have craved answers, seeking purpose and belonging.

Nearly every day since September 12, 2001, Muslim Millennials have seen the word “Islam” or “Muslim” on the front pages of papers on- and off-line. They have grown up scrutinized because of their religion, and much of this attention is not positive. As a result, they are asking questions like: What does it mean to be modern and Muslim? What is the difference between culture and religion? Who speaks for my generation? While members of earlier generations might have turned to close-knit families and communities for help answering such questions, Millennials are tuning in to unsavory figures encountered on the internet and in other venues. Extremists prey on young Muslims and offer ready-made answers designed specifically to appeal to this generation. They market their ideas with savvy and alarming expertise—from magazines to apps, YouTube sermons to Hip-Hop and poetry.

That is by no means all that’s going on. Some Muslim women are becoming far more conservative across the planet, rejecting established, local traditions of dress and society. They are “veiling” when their mothers and grandmothers did not. They are listening to radical sermons on satellite TV beamed from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. They are downloading music, poetry, and blogs that celebrate isolation and hatred of the “other.” They are keeping their children away from people who are not “like them.” And most recently, some are joining the armies of ISIL. Because a mother is a child’s first teacher, and because some women now wish join the fight, young women are in a position to make or break their succeeding generation.

For the first time since 9/11, we are re-awakening emphatically to the growing threat posed by extremists. At the moment, we are rightfully concerned about the potential of radicalized youth returning from battlefields to conduct terrorist actions. But in addition to the short-term impacts on public safety, we should be concerned about the long-term ability of battle-hardened extremists to build new terrorist networks at home and extend existing ones by preying on youth. There is a critical ideological battle to be waged here. Extremists remain radicalized once they return. They are technologically savvy and understand how to use emotions to attract recruits. They also might command heightened and growing legitimacy in Muslim communities. Hard power responses such as retrieving passports are a start, but we need to do much more to prevent recruitment of new terrorists.

Fortunately for us, the extremists possess a hidden vulnerability. Credible voices—those liked and trusted by Muslim youth—can win youth over with narratives that counter extremist messages. Who are these credible voices? They are not those of the United States Government. No government on earth—ours or any other—is credible among Muslim youth. Like any other kids on the planet, Muslim youth listen to their peers, are persuaded by popular ideas, and are passionate about belonging to something that seems real to them. To prevent recruitment of new terrorists, we must find new, innovative ways of boosting credible voices, helping them to drown out the extremists in the global marketplace of ideas.

If we clamp down on recruitment, then before too long, ISIL and others will not have armies. Given that the radicalization of an individual takes place gradually, why haven’t we done more to intercede proactively during the initial stages of ideological persuasion? Why are we only interceding much later by attempting to stop extremists as they seek to cross national borders? Recruitment is a relatively new phenomenon, but we certainly possess enough information 14 years after 9/11 to address the issue and scale up counter-measures at the local level, both in our country and around the world. We must decide if our goal is merely to stop an immediate threat, or to stop recruitment from happening in the first place.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

9/11 to Today: Setting up our defenses on soft power

The U.S. Government has struggled since 9/11 to wage a “war of ideas.” After 9/11, we attempted to engage in such a war against al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Seeking to thwart their recruitment efforts, we focused on countering their narratives of “us” versus “them.” These efforts took place under the umbrella of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), a concept that has become fashionable as of late but that

actually dates from the Bush administration. Back then, it was an upward struggle to get the inter-agency to buy into CVE. Most policy makers in our country and abroad couldn't envision how we could develop organic voices on the ground that could push back against al-Qaeda's ideology.

Still, several visionaries did understand that although the U.S. Government did not have street cred with average Muslim youth, we did have the power to build platforms to raise up voices and build movements of credible voices. Thanks to the commitment and open-mindedness of these visionaries, we seeded initiatives that allowed us to launch new efforts on the ground and created a road map of what was possible. We took risks and experimented. (During this time, very few European governments felt comfortable getting into an ideological battle, even though their communities were doing just that at micro levels. European governments were trying to find voices that had legitimacy and credibility, but as in our country, politics often prevented risk taking at the grassroots.)

During the 2 years that I served as senior advisor in the EUR Bureau (2007–2009), we helped start many soft power initiatives and networks, demonstrating a proof of concept. Initiatives like Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE) were designed in the image of Mothers Against Drunk Driving to be grassroots, local, and responsive. Recognizing that European Muslim youth needed positive role models, we created the first pan-European professional network that activated a new narrative and inspired others. By partnering with individuals and community groups across Europe, we managed to lift up voices of Muslims who had both influence within local neighborhoods and communities, establishing the basis for an empowering a grassroots countermovement in opposition of extremist manifestations and counter-extremist messages to share. We joined former extremists, victims of terrorism, entrepreneurs, bloggers, and women into layered networks dedicated to combatting the allure of the extremist narrative and ideology.

When Secretary Clinton learned of our accomplishments in Europe as conveners, facilitators and intellectual partners, she asked me to take our activities global. As special representative to Muslim communities (2009–2014), I used the same approach I did in the Bush administration to mobilize Muslim youth. I worked with our embassies to create first-of-a-kind global networks like Generation Change, a network of Muslim change makers who were committed to pushing back extremist ideology. I listened to what youth were saying about the changing nature of extremists' appeal and tactics and focused on helping connect social entrepreneurs, activists, and other organic voices. We also launched efforts like Viral Peace, a program to train credible voices to push back against extremists on-line. Further, we identified "black holes" where we knew more work had to be done, including the increasing phenomenon of the radicalization of women.

What I was asked to do at State during the Bush administration was unique. At the time, forward-thinking policy-makers understood that America had to proactively engage with Muslim communities in Europe. You might remember the intense days after the Danish Cartoon Crisis when everyone—our Nation, as well as our European allies—was caught off-guard by the realization that something happening in Copenhagen could affect lives in Kabul. Sadly, we have seen this phenomenon play out all too often. A false rumor, a video, a preacher threatening to burn the Quran can all unleash unrest as well as violence in faraway places.

What I was asked to do at State in the Obama administration was also unique and gave me a chance to work closely with my State colleagues to build out micro-scaled prototypes. It cemented my belief that the most innovative opportunities we have to defeat the spread of this ideology involve partnering with those outside of Government.

We must now dramatically "scale-up" innovative, entrepreneurial CVE programs if we are to prevail. I'm not talking about engaging in a messaging war on Twitter. I'm talking about getting credible, local voices to inoculate their communities against extremist techniques and appeal. I'm talking about helping parents to understand extremist tactics so that they can educate their children about this threat. I'm talking about supporting the hundreds of grassroots ideas and initiatives in our country and around the world that reject extremist ideology. I'm talking about working closely with mental health professionals to understand the adolescent mind and to develop programs that can help stop radicalization. Ultimately, we need to monopolize the marketplace of ideas on-line and off-line, spawning credible voices that give new agency and purpose to this generation.

One lesson I have learned is that these local ideas don't require large budgets. They do, however, require support and a certain mindset from those at the top. We must allow for creativity, understand that not everything we try is going to bloom, and accept that we do not have to put the American flag on everything we do. When it comes to countering violent extremism, one size doesn't fit all. We have to listen

to what communities are saying is going to make a difference and be flexible and inventive enough to help them do it. It is not ideas from Washington that can make a difference in Tashkent or Toronto.

Make no mistake, CVE efforts are still very much in their infancy. Though our Government has tried to counter extremist narratives through formal channels, very, very little attention has been paid overall to CVE. We haven't approached the ideological war with the same resources or respect we did the physical war, devoting ourselves to an integrated strategy of hard and soft power. We did not ask the kinds of questions around the ideology that would have informed us of things to come and the global appeal, and we did not restructure ourselves to get ahead of the extremists. As a result, the extremist ideology has spread, leaving us where we are today: Facing a virtual army of recruits not just from other countries, but from our own.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

ISIS and beyond: Going All In

This year began with the attack on Charlie Hebdo, and just recently we watched the massacre in Tunisia. We have become all too familiar with gruesome images of beheadings and other atrocities, the destruction of human heritage, and the warnings of attacks on the homeland. Yet still we remain locked into thinking that we can deal with the extremist threat primarily through hard power alone. While we have seen an increase in the interagency conversation around the ideological war, and "CVE" is the currency everyone is floating, our overall strategy to defeat the extremists does not contain a sufficient soft power dimension.

We can't create an ideological countermovement on the backs of a few isolated Government-funded programs. It requires much broader commitment and focus. Our strategy must be a cohesive, integrated, and comprehensive approach to the threat we face. We must wage a battle on all fronts with money, accountability, and experienced personnel. We must look at this like we would any other contagion, rooting out its hosts globally and destroying its defenses. The extremists seem all powerful, but they are not. We have yet to unleash the full power of our skills in the soft power space. When we truly go "all in," we'll see how vulnerable the extremists really are.

Principles for future action should include the following:

- Investing significantly in soft power the way we did during the Cold War. We must give soft power as much credibility as we do hard power.
- Focusing on millennials globally, as this is the demographic from which the extremists recruit.
- Creating a comprehensive, coordinated strategy that does not skirt the ideological threat and that mobilizes all available levers of power (again, as we did during the Cold War). Such a strategy should incorporate lessons we've learned from the ground up, and it should invest in local answers.
- Adopting helpful and appropriate goals. The point here is not to win a popularity contest—to "win hearts and minds." Rather, it's to get voices on-line and off-line to push back against extremist messages. It's to flood the marketplace of ideas with on-line and off-line counter-narratives articulated by Muslims themselves. We need to act as convener, facilitator, and intellectual partner to Muslim youth, bringing together their great ideas and seeding them. This approach will hold far more credibility in Muslim communities.
- Publicly condemning countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and others that are igniting extremist ideology in a variety of ways—through textbooks, radical preachers, and mosques that promote hate and reject the diversity of Muslims around the world (not to speak of other faiths).
- Attacking extremist recruiting proactively rather than relying on reactive and exponentially costlier "hard power" interventions once military threats have already materialized. Remember, without recruits, there are no troops.
- Ramping up initiatives and knowledge about the radicalization of women, and developing new approaches to mobilize them against radicalism.
- Creating awareness campaigns about radicalization the way we do for diseases like AIDS or breast cancer.
- Normalizing the conversation about extremism so that more private-sector money flows into soft power initiatives. Government can do this by sharing information about what we are seeing and convening helpful players outside of Government.
- Anticipating extremist ideological attacks, and keeping an arsenal of strong counter-actions at the ready. In this field, there are few real surprises. We can easily predict the kind of tools extremists will use against us. We ought to be ready with swift responses, not wait days and weeks to react.

- Creating senior-level positions across Government at home and abroad to focus on CVE, making the individuals in these positions accountable to Congress.
- Producing a strategy that not only has short-, medium-, and long-term goals but identifies the layers of elements in the ecosystem that allows the ideology to grow.
- Including the mental health components as well as millennial data into our assessments and strategy.

The extremists are both evil and intelligent. They are doing everything they can from all angles to re-make the world according to their apocalyptic vision. We understand this, but we're not doing enough to neutralize their methods. As a CVE pioneer, I took part in policy conversations at the highest level, and I also engaged at the grassroots with the most vulnerable of communities. I know first-hand what we can and cannot do. As I watch this horrific era of ISIL, I am convinced that we can and must do more.

In the years since 9/11, a great deal of politicking has taken place around the issue of radicalization, and unfortunately this has impeded an honest assessment of how to mobilize communities themselves to prevent young Americans from being seduced. Critics of CVE bemoan a lack of science supporting measures that might fight extremist ideology. They want proof that counter-narratives work and they want any approach to stemming the appeal to produce measurable results. But are we supposed to do nothing and let the extremists blast the marketplace on-line and off-line with their poison, waiting for a crisis to respond? Efforts to mobilize credible voices on- and off-line offer us hope. In the case of on-line recruitment, data exists that can help us evaluate the effectiveness of counter-measures. To evaluate off-line CVE measures, we can seek out anecdotes confirming whether one-on-one interactions or specific programs have moved kids from interest in extremism to rejection of it. The science may not be perfect, but doing nothing is not an option and we need to be more proactive, not less. We can take action without infringing on civil rights and civil liberties, and we can partner with coalitions whose members understand that the predators trying to win over our youth are a problem for all of America, not a specific community.

Our efforts to deal with the ideological threat have of course evolved since 9/11. The trajectory of U.S. Government thinking has gone from “winning hearts and minds” and a Rapid Response Unit to hashtags and a Global Strategic Communication Center. And yet, we continue to come up short. Formerly many didn’t accept CVE, but now they make the mistake of calling everything CVE. We have tried to bracket the threat around terrorist groups and regions, building out coordination in artificial ways. We have never given real money, real strategic importance, or real personnel a chance to do all we are capable of doing to win this ideological war. In some ways, are having the same conversations we did right after 9/11—they seem new to many because we have not shared expertise and background, and new personnel insist there is nothing to be learned from those who worked on this before them. It is astounding that even in the aftermath of the President’s Summit on CVE, an important convening and re-energized moment, we are still locked into an inter-agency that is uncoordinated and under-resourced. Very little innovation exists around the “how” of building initiatives or what those initiatives might be. Further, we are insisting that this is a messaging war when it is much more than that.

We stand today at a crossroads. We possess a great deal of information about how people get radicalized, why they get radicalized, and what can prevent them from getting radicalized. We can either continue to do CVE in an episodic way without accountability or imagination, or we can put all the pieces together—the ecosystem, the new counter-narratives and tools, and the specific demographic—into a cohesive global strategy that mobilizes both hard and soft power.

WHAT'S COMING?

The ideological threat from extremists will impact us in several ways in the years ahead. First, we know that the extremists are already recruiting among the 4 million refugees (including a large number of youth) who have fled fighting in Syria and Iraq. We can not yet know the numbers or the impact that such recruitment will have on that region or other parts of the globe, but clearly this represents a dangerous and compelling threat.

Second, while governments are still trying to understand the extremists’ recruitment of women, we are learning of children already training to be ISIS warriors. Referred to as “cubs,” these children, once grown, will comprise a massive untested demographic. What do we know of adults that have been brainwashed to be violent when only 7 or 8 years old?

Third, the *New York Times* recently highlighted a story of a young American girl from rural Washington State who was seduced by the ideology of an ISIS recruiter. Her story shocked and alarmed many Americans. Similarly, the parents of an American teen raised in the suburbs of Chicago were shocked to learn that their son had been recruited by ISIS. These stories are not isolated incidents. We are seeing a more robust conversation from Massachusetts to California around the radicalization of Americans, but importantly, we are also seeing a more open conversation about how to stop it on the home front. As we look at the next chapter of the extremist threat, we know home-grown radicalization along with so called lone-wolf attacks on the homeland will constitute a serious threat.

Fourth, as we have seen in the last couple of years, the extremists are changing and combining allegiances. This may continue, and we may also see new groups emerge as technology gets more sophisticated, extremists get even smarter in their recruitment efforts, and their target demographic grows larger. What will this mean for policy makers as we build out our strategy and understand the threat we face?

Finally, there has been much discussion around foreign fighters returning. We do not currently know what the impact will be on their ability to recruit and the aftermath of their particular journeys.

This hearing seeks to determine whether the U.S. Government is failing to counter the growing threat of the extremists. I believe we have learned a lot since 9/11 and in both the Bush and Obama administrations we have seen leadership on and commitment to this issue. However, 14 years after 9/11, we should not feel content with the pace of our efforts. At the same time, I leave you with a positive message. We can destroy the extremists' ability to recruit young Muslims. We can beat extremists at their own game, ending their exploitation of the Muslim identity crisis. Doing so won't cost a fraction of traditional hard power solutions, but it will require that we take a more entrepreneurial and innovative approach to policy-making. We must stop playing catch-up and get ahead of trends. We must take a broader view and not look at specific conflicts or extremist groups as if they are "one-offs." As a Nation, we must move swiftly, like nimbler start-ups. We defeated communist ideology during the Cold War by mustering creativity and full-on dedication. We can and must do this again. The time to act is now. So what are we waiting for?

Chairman McCaul. Thank you, Ms. Pandith.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Hughes.

STATEMENT OF SEAMUS HUGHES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, PROGRAM ON EXTREMISM, CENTER FOR CYBER AND HOME-LAND SECURITY, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Mr. HUGHES. Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Thompson, and Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before this committee. I am the deputy director of Program on Extremism at George Washington University.

Prior to joining the program, I spent over 3 years in the National Counterterrorism Center as a staffer leading the countering violent extremism efforts. With my colleagues in three other departments, we held dozens of engagement events around the country and worked with community partners on preventing individuals from joining groups like ISIS. My testimony today is informed by these personal experiences on the forefront of this new policy challenge.

Countering violent extremism is an inherently amorphous term. The effort is fraught with civil rights and civil liberty concerns. Yet CVE, if properly implemented, can help sway young people from radicalizing, therefore saving lives and enabling law enforcement to concentrate on those who made the leap to violent militancy. On the other hand, if improperly implemented, CVE can have an adverse effect on building communities of trust around the country. It is a delicate exercise but one that I believe the Government and communities have a moral responsibility to attempt.

It is undeniable that there has been a rise in the number of ISIS-related arrests this year. Even more disturbing, a number of those arrests included minors. I have interviewed some of those who have been charged. I have talked with the families of missing children. I have met with religious leaders and civic leaders around this country. The status quo of doing nothing with radicalized individuals or putting them away for 25 years is untenable. We need a new approach. It is incumbent on us to provide those concerned about their loved ones a middle way. Properly implemented CVE programs could provide that alternative while also alleviating law enforcement's burden.

Over the last decade, governments throughout the world have invested substantial resources to devise CVE programs. The U.S. Government has lagged behind in creating a comprehensive CVE approach. Instead, they focused on one-up events and isolated programs. Though the United States has a domestic CVE strategy, its efforts are disjointed and underfunded.

In the last year, the administration has had a renewed focus on CVE. Nonetheless, the strategy faces key challenges: First, there is a lack of funding. Resources devoted to CVE have been highly inadequate. CVE units within each agency are woefully understaffed.

No. 2, there is a lack of a lead agency. There needs to be a single point of responsibility and a point of contact for coordination, for public advocacy groups to know who they can talk to, and for Congress to have some oversight on it.

No. 3, there has been a singular focus on one form of extremism. The recent terrorist attack in Charleston is a painful reminder, if there ever was a need to be reminded, that Islamist extremism is hardly the only form of extremism that poses a threat. CVE has to be expanded to address other forms of extremism.

No. 4, there has been a resistance from Muslim communities on this issue. Successful CVE efforts need support from a broad community cross-section. Some American Muslim civic groups embrace CVE efforts, while others decry it as a surveillance ruse or effort that singles out American Muslims. In addressing these concerns, the U.S. Government would do well to listen to not just only the most vocal voices, but also the grassroots organizations.

CVE trends and various Europe countries where authorities have implemented ambitious CVE strategies over the last decade offers some useful pointers. What we are seeing is European authorities are considering individual interventions as a crucial part in their counterterrorism efforts as they are relatively cost-effective and easier to evaluate.

Let me close with a general observation: There are violent extremists, who should be arrested and put away for a considerable amount of time. Our intelligence officers and law enforcement should be commended for that work. But there is also a subsection of individuals that are still persuadable before arrest, that are still reachable before they cross that legal threshold. CVE should never be about criminalizing beliefs. Instead, it is, at its core, about protecting our communities and safeguarding the vulnerable individuals who are still reachable.

In the course of my career, I have had the opportunity to talk to fathers, mothers, friends of young men and women who have left

this country to go to conflict zones. Professionally, as a Government official, and personally, as a father, this was an intense sense of sorrow and regret that I wasn't able to help them before they got on that plane. Many of these kids are barely old enough for a driver's license. They were reachable before they crossed that legal threshold. We have a responsibility to address this shortfall. We also have a responsibility, and I would say a moral responsibility, to prevent more families from going through that same tragedy. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I welcome any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hughes follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SEAMUS HUGHES

JULY 15, 2015

Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Thompson, and Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am the deputy director of George Washington University's Program on Extremism, a new academic initiative inside the university's Center for Cyber and Homeland Security. Our mandate is to explore complex issues such as terrorism, radicalization, and countering violent extremism through a non-partisan and empirical approach.

Prior to joining the program, I spent over 3 years as a lead National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) staffer on countering violent extremism issues. With my colleagues in three other departments, we held dozens of engagement events around the country and worked with community partners on preventing individuals from joining groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). My testimony today is informed by these personal experiences on the forefront of this new policy challenge.

Countering Violent Extremism, commonly referred to as CVE, is an inherently amorphous term. It can be described as measures aimed at preventing individuals from radicalizing and reversing the process of those who have already radicalized. The effort is fraught with civil rights and civil liberties concerns.

Yet CVE, if properly implemented, can help sway young people from radicalizing, thereby saving lives and enabling law enforcement to concentrate on those who have made the leap into violent militancy. On the other hand, if improperly implemented, CVE can have an adverse effect on building trust with communities. It is a delicate exercise but one that I believe Government and communities have a moral responsibility to attempt.

At least 200 U.S. persons have travelled or attempted to travel to Syria to participate in the conflict. This year, nearly 50 were arrested and charged with various terrorism-related offenses. Even more disturbing, a number of those who have attempted to travel to Syria or Iraq are minors. I interviewed some of those who have been charged, talked with families of "missing" children, and met with religious and civic leaders throughout this country. The status quo of either doing nothing with radicalized individuals or locking them away for 25 years is untenable. It is incumbent on us to provide those concerned about their loved ones a middle way. Properly implemented CVE programs could provide that alternative while simultaneously alleviating the burden of cases law enforcement has to address.

Over the last decade, governments throughout the world have invested substantial resources in devising CVE strategies. The United States has somewhat lagged behind in creating a comprehensive CVE approach, instead focusing on a series of isolated programs and episodic outreach efforts. Though the United States has a domestic CVE strategy, its efforts are disjointed and underfunded. Several overlapping reasons account for this deficiency, including:

- the limited number of terrorism cases in the United States;
- the confusion generated by the overlap of several agencies dealing with radicalization-related issues in various jurisdictions;
- a National culture, reinforced by core constitutional values protecting freedom of conscience, that does not believe law enforcement should grapple with ideological and even indirectly religiously-related issues.

The Boston Marathon bombing, and later the rise of ISIS, triggered a renewed focus on CVE, culminating in the February 2015 high-profile White House summit. Part of the revamped effort includes pilot programs in three cities, each with a distinct approach: Minneapolis-St. Paul's focused on societal-level concerns, Los Angeles' on community engagement, and Boston's on interventions with radicalized individuals.

The administration's well-meaning CVE strategy faces key challenges:

- *Lack of funding.*—Resources devoted to CVE have been highly inadequate, and CVE units within each relevant agency remain understaffed.
- *Lack of lead agency.*—Current CVE efforts appropriately involve an array of agencies at the National and local levels. Yet there needs to be a single responsible point of contact for coordination, public advocacy matters, and Congressional oversight.
- *A singular focus on one form of extremism.*—The recent terrorist attack in Charleston, South Carolina was a painful reminder, if there was ever a need, that Islamist extremism is hardly the only form of extremism that poses a threat. This should not be an either/or proposition. CVE has to be expanded to address other forms of extremism.
- *Resistance from Muslim communities.*—Successful CVE efforts need support from a broad community cross-section. Some American Muslim civic groups embrace CVE efforts, while others decry it as a surveillance ruse or an effort that singles out American Muslims. In addressing these concerns, the U.S. Government would do well to listen not just to the most vocal voices but also grassroots organizations at the local level.

CVE trends in various European countries, where authorities have implemented ambitious strategies for over a decade, offer useful pointers to U.S. officials.¹ European authorities consider individual interventions a crucial part of their counterterrorism efforts, as they are relatively cost-effective and easier to evaluate. For example, in the Danish city of Aarhus an innovative program to rehabilitate dozens of returning foreign fighters seems to have shown encouraging preliminary successes, with only a few going back to militancy.

Because the radicalization process is complex and highly variable, European de-radicalization efforts seek to tailor interventions to each situation. This complicates efforts to develop broad National programs with easily replicable best practices. It also requires investing time to set up a network of community leaders with appropriate competencies.

The United States does not need to replicate Europe's most ambitious CVE efforts, as it faces a significantly smaller radicalization challenge. General preventive measures, particularly those promoting socio-economic development, should be implemented only in limited cases, as communities generally enjoy high levels of integration. Engagement and other trust-building initiatives are useful and should be continued. Officials increasingly see the importance of expanding CVE's focus on community engagement to include targeted interventions with individuals who have become radicalized but have not mobilized to violence. Nonetheless, these targeted interventions so far have been deployed at the whim of local authorities, rather than via an articulated and tested methodology.

At this stage, the most pressing need is for the administration to build a carefully crafted system for interventions as a potential alternative to prosecution. Working with civil rights advocates and experts in alternatives to incarceration, the Government should create legal and policy guidance on minimum standards for intervention efforts that address the specific roles of Government and communities, as well as the legal parameters of interveners who currently place themselves at risk of liability if interventions go awry. While interventions are best implemented at the local level, they require a high-level framework and clear guidance from Federal officials.

Let me close with a general observation. There are violent extremists who should be arrested and put away for a considerable time. Our intelligence and law enforcement community does a great job at that and should be commended for it. But there is also a subset of individuals that are still persuadable and who can be reached before they make a choice that will irrevocably alter the Government's ability to take any action other than arrest.

CVE should never be about criminalizing beliefs. Instead, it is, at its core, about protecting our communities and safeguarding vulnerable individuals who are still reachable. In the course of my career, I have had the opportunity to talk with the fathers, mothers, and friends of young men and women who left this country to go to conflict zones. Professionally, as a Government official, and personally, as a father, there was an intense sense of both sorrow and regret that we couldn't reach those kids—many of them barely old enough for a driver's license—before they got on the plane. We need to address this shortfall in our counterterrorism approach.

¹ Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, *Countering Violent Extremism in America*, June 16, 2015. Available at: <https://cchs.gwu.edu/sites/cchs.gwu.edu/files/downloads/CVE%20in%20-America%20.pdf>.

We have a responsibility to prevent more families from going through the same tragedy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I welcome any questions.

Chairman McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Hughes.
The Chair recognizes Mr. Cohen.

**STATEMENT OF J. RICHARD COHEN, PRESIDENT, SOUTHERN
POVERTY LAW CENTER**

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. September 11 was the Pearl Harbor of our time. The devastating attacks led to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and focused the Nation's attention on the threat of Islamic extremism. Yet, because the horror of 9/11, the focus on other threats was put aside. Let me give the committee an example. After the Oklahoma City bombing, Attorney General Reno formed a special task force to coordinate the country's response to the threat of domestic terrorism. The task force was scheduled to hold one of its monthly meetings on 9/11. Of course, it didn't for obvious reasons. The problem wasn't that the task force didn't meet that day. The problem was that it simply stopped meeting altogether as the country's focus shifted to the threat of Islamic extremism. At the same time, though, a different kind of threat, the threat from the radical right, was growing. My colleagues and I have documented a tremendous increase in the time since 9/11 on the number of white supremacist and other hate groups operating in our country. During this same period, there was also a marked increase in radical right violence.

After President Obama was first elected, we detected another alarming trend, a tremendous increase in the number of conspiracy-minded radical anti-Government groups, the same kind of groups that were prevalent during the period of the Oklahoma City bombing and the same kind of groups that have killed a number of law enforcement officials since 9/11. In the years before President Obama's election, DHS maintained a modest commitment to monitoring non-Islamic domestic extremism, but that commitment waned after a controversy erupted over a report that the Department issued in 2009. As the *Washington Post* reported, DHS cut the number of personnel studying domestic extremism unrelated to Islam, canceled numerous State and local law enforcement briefings, and held up nearly a dozen reports on its extremist groups in the wake of the controversy. In the last 2 years, I would like to point out, we have actually seen a decrease in the number of anti-Government and hate groups operating in the country.

But this decrease has not been matched by a decrease in the level of radical right activity. We have seen, instead, an increase in the number of persons associated with white supremacist activity and an uptick in the level of violence. In the last 5 years, for example, the number of registered users on Stormfront, the leading neo-Nazi forum, has increased by over 50 percent to over 300,000. I am not talking about 300,000 visitors. I am talking about 300,000 people who have registered to spew their venom on-line. Other white supremacist websites have also seen increases.

These sites are echo chambers where people, like Dylann Roof, the confessed Charleston shooter, have their racist views validated

and encouraged. We issued a report last year that documented that Stormfront users had killed numerous people in the previous 5 years. Glenn Frazier Cross, a frequent poster on another racist website, killed 3 people last year at Jewish facilities in Overland Park, Kansas. We knew Cross well. His followers once plotted to blow up our building. His killings in Overland Park, Kansas, led the Justice Department to revive the task force that had originally been established after the Oklahoma City bombing.

We have also seen in the last year increased interests from DHS in the threat of non-Islamic extremism. At the same time, we have seen indications that it is still on the back burner. As the Charleston massacre, of course, makes clear, that threat is very real. As Mr. Thompson indicated, a recent survey documented that law enforcement agencies consider anti-Government extremists the most severe threat that they face, and as has been widely reported, more persons have been killed since 9/11 by radical right terrorists than by Islamic extremists.

I don't want to make too much, though, of these last points. Many law enforcement officers have been killed in recent years by radical right fanatics, so it is not surprising that law enforcement community itself is very much on edge. If we started the count of deaths the day before 9/11 rather than the day after, the figures would tell us an entirely different story. We need not contend that the threat of non-Islamic terrorism is comparable to the kind of threat that brought down the Twin Towers to make the point that it is a serious threat that deserves the full measure of the Government's attention. The Charleston shootings make that point for us. I would urge the committee to ensure that the fight against Islamic extremism does not take the Government's attention away from other threats that endanger our great country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cohen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF J. RICHARD COHEN

JULY 15, 2015

My name is Richard Cohen. I am an attorney and the president of the Southern Poverty Law Center, a civil rights organization founded in 1971 and headquartered in Montgomery, Alabama. For more than three decades, we have been monitoring, issuing reports about, and training law enforcement officials on far-right extremist activity in the United States.¹ Because of that work, I was invited in 2010 to serve on the Department of Homeland Security's Countering Violent Extremism Working Group. I am honored to appear before the committee today.

In my testimony, I'd like to make two basic points. First, as the killings at Charleston's "Mother Emanuel" AME Church vividly illustrate, the threat of radical-right terrorism in our country is a serious one. Second, it is critical that the Federal Government devote sufficient attention to countering that threat and not allow its resources to be inappropriately skewed toward the fight against terrorism from Islamic extremists.

¹ We publish our investigative findings on-line and in the *Intelligence Report*, a journal distributed to more than 50,000 law enforcement officers; we maintain an extensive database, conduct an annual census of hate and anti-Government groups, and assist law enforcement officials by providing information about these groups' activities; and, each year we train thousands of officers, including many who work for Federal agencies, on the dangers of domestic terrorism and hate crimes. We also have won a number of multi-million-dollar court verdicts on behalf of victims of violence committed by hate group members. These suits have financially crippled some of the country's most notorious white supremacist groups, including Klan networks that terrorized the African-American community during and after the civil rights movement.

THE THREAT OF NON-ISLAMIC DOMESTIC TERRORISM IS EXTREMELY SERIOUS

In the first few years of the 21st Century, we began to detect a significant increase in radical-right activity in the United States. The number of hate groups—organizations that vilify entire groups of people based on their race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or some other characteristic—nearly doubled during a 10-year span—from 457 in 1999 to 926 in 2008. This growth continued during the first 2 years of the Obama administration, to a record 1,018 groups in 2011. In our view, the most important factor driving this increase was a backlash to our country's changing demographics. For many on the radical right, President Obama's election symbolized the kind of "change" they fear.

Although the growth in the number of hate groups began before President Obama took office, his election did coincide with another phenomenon: The dramatic resurgence of a far-right movement that includes armed militias and other organizations that view the Federal Government as their enemy and generally believe that U.S. political and economic elites are part of international conspiracy aimed at creating a one-world, totalitarian government. Originally rooted in the racist ideology that animated Posse Comitatus in the 1970s, the anti-Government "Patriot" movement first appeared in its current form during the 1990s in response to Federal gun control measures and the incidents at Ruby Ridge and Waco. It saw a steep decline in activity in the years following the bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal building by movement sympathizer Timothy McVeigh and remained largely moribund until the election of President Obama. In 2008, we documented 149 groups. By 2012, there were 1,360—an increase of more than 800 percent.

The surge in radical-right group activity peaked during the 2011–2012 period. Since then, we have seen a significant decline in the number of both hate groups (now at 784) as well as anti-Government "Patriot" groups (now at 874). Several political and economic factors account for this decline: A strengthening economy, crackdowns by law enforcement and the accelerated movement of radicals out of groups and into cyber space. Also, movements naturally tend to lose momentum over time; in addition, President Obama's reelection may have had a demoralizing effect on the radical right.

Despite this drop in the number of radical-right organizations, white supremacist activity has not declined. Much of it, in fact, has simply migrated to the internet, where extremists can disseminate and absorb propaganda, and connect with other extremists in relative anonymity. Since the year President Obama was inaugurated, for example, the number of people registered on Stormfront, perhaps the most important neo-Nazi web forum, has doubled—to 300,000. About two-thirds of the site's registered users are from this country.

Violence committed by non-Islamic domestic extremists also has continued at alarming levels. A July 2014 intelligence assessment by the DHS warned of a "spike within the past year in violence committed by militia extremists and lone offenders who hold violent anti-government beliefs."² In February 2015, the DHS released a report warning of attacks by "sovereign citizens"—extremists who do not recognize the authority of the Government—citing 24 acts of ideology-based violence, threats, or plots (mostly against law enforcement targets) since 2010.³ The data we've collected reflects an uptick in racist crimes and terrorist plots in recent years.⁴ The backdrop to this increase is important. A 2013 study by West Point's Combating Terrorism Center found that right-wing violence in the 2000–2011 period surpassed that of the 1990s by a factor of four.⁵

In some ways, the suspect in the Charleston massacre, Dylann Roof, represents the new face of domestic terrorism: The extremist who acts alone after being radicalized and inspired on-line by an extremist ideology. The Charleston attack came 14 months after a neo-Nazi and former Klan leader named Frazier Glenn Cross (also known as Frazier Glenn Miller) murdered three people at a community center and a retirement facility, both with Jewish affiliations, in Overland Park, Kansas. It came nearly 3 years after another white supremacist, Wade Michael Page, walked into the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin near Milwaukee and opened fire

²Domestic Violent Extremists Pose Increased Threat to Government Officials and Law Enforcement, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, Department of Homeland Security, July 22, 2014.

³Sovereign Citizen Extremist Ideology Will Drive Violence at Home, During Travel, and at Government Facilities, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, Department of Homeland Security, Feb. 5, 2015.

⁴Terror from the Right: Plots, Conspiracies and Racist Rampages since Oklahoma City, Southern Poverty Law Center, at <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/publications/terror-from-the-right>.

⁵Challengers from the Sidelines: Understanding America's Violent Far-Right, Arie Perliger, Combating Terrorism Center, Jan. 15, 2013.

with a 9 mm pistol, killing six worshipers, including the temple's president and three priests, and wounding four other people. The wounded included the first police officer to respond; he was shot multiple times.

In each case, the attacker was an avowed white supremacist. And in each case, the shooter targeted members of a minority group (though in Kansas, the victims were not actually Jewish). But, unlike the attackers in Wisconsin and Kansas, Roof apparently had not been a member of a racist hate group. From what we now know, he had only recently been radicalized and indoctrinated into the world of white nationalism. And his radicalization, according to a manifesto published on a website registered to him and that authorities believe he wrote, occurred on-line.

Roof left many clues about his motivations and the process that led him to commit an act of terror. He was seen in a Facebook photo wearing a jacket adorned with patches representing the flags of former regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia that brutally enforced white minority rule. In his approximately 2,400-word manifesto, he described becoming "racially aware" in the echo chamber of white supremacist websites following the controversy over the death of Trayvon Martin in 2012. On the site of the racist Council of Conservative Citizens, he found "pages upon pages of these brutal black on White murders." He "saw the same things happening in England and France, and in all the other Western European countries," then "found out about the Jewish problem." Roof wrote further that "by no means should we wait any longer to take drastic action." As he was murdering his victims, Roof told them that black people were "taking over our country" and "rap[ing] our women."

Roof's words and the symbols he used are instructive. They show that he was thoroughly indoctrinated into a transnational white nationalist movement that is emerging as the world grows more connected by technology. The days are gone when white supremacists fought to maintain Jim Crow segregation or white hegemony in the South.⁶ Today, they promote a narrative of an on-going "white genocide"—the idea that white people are being displaced by people of color across the globe. This message has been distilled into what is known in white nationalist circles as "the mantra," a 221-word attack on multiculturalism that reads in part: "Anti-racist is a code word for anti-white." Its author, Robert Whitaker of Columbia, South Carolina, is now the 2016 vice presidential candidate for the white nationalist American Freedom Party.

Anders Behring Breivik, who slaughtered 77 people in 2011 because he thought they were enabling Muslim immigration, expressed sentiments remarkably similar to those encapsulated by the white nationalist mantra and cited by Roof. Breivik was also, at one time, a registered user of Stormfront. Our 2014 report on Stormfront—which provides a window into the on-line radicalization process—showed that its users have committed nearly 100 murders, including Breivik's, since 2009.⁷ Almost all of the killers had regularly posted comments on Stormfront and other racist sites in the 18 months prior to their attacks. The forum appears to have helped nurture and rationalize their racial hatred.

Stormfront is merely one example of web forums that promote racial hatred. Frazier Glenn Cross regularly posted comments on Vanguard News Network, a neo-Nazi forum with the slogan "No Jews. Just Right." Racist and anti-Semitic threads can be found on many other sites, including mainstream forums like Reddit, which now has a community of crudely anti-black sites known as "the Chimpire." In addition, hate music used to recruit young people can be purchased from even some of the largest on-line music retailers, though several—including iTunes and Spotify—have taken steps in recent months to remove such music, at our urging.

As further evidence of this globalization of white nationalism, we have documented more than 30 instances in the past 2 years of movement leaders traveling abroad to strengthen their international ties. After one such trip to England and France, Jared Taylor of American Renaissance, a group that publishes material purporting to show the inferiority of black people, wrote that: "The fight in Europe is exactly the same as ours."⁸

This message is used to recruit and radicalize young men like Roof, who absorb propaganda on-line and then may act alone or in small groups. Earlier this year, we issued a study—*The Age of the Wolf*—finding that 46 of 63 domestic terror incidents (74%) culled from academic databases and the SPLC's own files over the pre-

⁶"White Supremacists Without Borders," Morris Dees and J. Richard Cohen, *The New York Times*, June 22, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/22/opinion/white-supremacists-without-borders.html?r=0>.

⁷*White Homicide Worldwide*, Southern Poverty Law Center, April 16, 2014, at <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/publications/White-Homicide-Worldwide>.

⁸American Renaissance website, at <http://www.amren.com/features/2013/04/report-from-france-and-britain/>.

vious 6 years were the work of a “lone wolf,” a single person. Ninety percent were the work of no more than 2 people. These are the kinds of attacks that are the most difficult for law enforcement to detect in advance and the most likely to succeed. Our report also found that a domestic terrorism incident, either an attack or foiled plot, occurred on average every 34 days during the period examined, from 2009 to 2014.⁹

GOVERNMENT MUST ENSURE RESOURCES DEVOTED TO NON-ISLAMIC DOMESTIC TERRORISM ARE COMMENSURATE WITH THE THREAT

After the deadly Oklahoma City bombing on April 19, 1995, then-Attorney General Reno formed a special task force to coordinate the country’s response to the threat of domestic terrorism. The task force was scheduled to hold one of its monthly meetings on September 11, 2001, but did not do so for obvious reasons. But the task force did not miss just one meeting. As the country’s focus shifted to the new and devastating threat of Islamic terrorism, the task force did not meet again for 13 years. Only after Miller killed three people at Jewish facilities in Overland Park, Kansas, in April 2014 and public pressure mounted did the Justice Department re-establish the task force.

The shift in focus to the threat of terrorism from Islamic extremists in the aftermath in 9/11 was not surprising. That event was the Pearl Harbor of our time. It led to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, over which this committee exercises oversight, as well as to our country’s involvement in 2 wars. But as the history of the Justice Department’s task force reflects, the pendulum swung too far in the direction of Islamic terrorism, at the expense of other threats, after 9/11.

The shadow of 9/11 has not been the only factor leading to a reduction in the resources and attention paid to non-Islamic terrorism in our country. Partisan politics also appear to have played a role. In April 2009, DHS released an Unclassified intelligence assessment to law enforcement officials entitled *Right-wing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment*.¹⁰ Yet, despite the report’s accuracy, then-DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano withdrew it following an outcry by those who claimed, falsely, that the report tarred conservatives as potential domestic terrorists. More significantly, the DHS unit responsible for the report was allowed to wither. In the wake of the controversy over the report, the *Washington Post* reported that DHS “cut the number of personnel studying domestic terrorism unrelated to Islam, canceled numerous State and local law enforcement briefings, and held up dissemination of nearly a dozen reports on extremist groups.”¹¹

Daryl Johnson, the former DHS senior domestic terrorism analyst who was the principal author of the 2009 DHS report, wrote on *The New York Times* website on June 24, 2015, that “through reckless neglect at nearly all levels of government, domestic terrorism not tied to Islam has become a cancer with no diagnosis or plan to address it.” There are, he wrote, hundreds of Government analysts looking for Islamist threats but “mere dozens” monitoring non-Islamic threats.¹²

Over the last 18 months, my colleagues and I have seen renewed attention to the threat of non-Islamic terrorism at both the Justice Department and DHS. Still, there are indications that radical-right terrorism continues to take a back seat to Islamic terrorism. In February, for example, when President Obama addressed the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism, which I attended, the first terrorist incident he mentioned was the Oklahoma City bombing. But the discussion at the summit itself focused almost exclusively on the threat of Islamic terrorism. In this committee’s Terror Threat Snapshot released on July 2, 2015—2 weeks after the Charleston massacre—there was no mention of the threat of terror from the radical right.¹³

⁹ *The Age of the Wolf*, Southern Poverty Law Center, Feb. 12, 2015, at <http://www.splcenter.org/lone-wolf>.

¹⁰ PDF on Southern Poverty Law Center website, at http://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/downloads/resource/DOJ_rwextremism2009.pdf.

¹¹ “Homeland Security Department curtails home-grown terror analysis,” *Washington Post*, June 7, 2011, at http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/homeland-security-department-curtails-home-grown-terror-analysis/2011/06/02/AGQEaDLH_story.html.

¹² “For Domestic Hate, Apply the Vigor and Strategy Used for Muslim Terror,” Daryl Johnson, *The New York Times*, June 24, 2015, at <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2015/06/24/charleston-and-the-threat-of-homegrown-hate-groups/for-domestic-hate-apply-the-vigor-and-strategy-used-for-muslim-terror>.

¹³ http://homeland.house.gov/sites/homeland.house.gov/files/documents/July%20Terror%20Threat%20Snapshot%20_0.pdf.

As I indicated in the previous section, however, the threat from the radical right is very real. In fact, in a study released in June 2015, the Triangle Center for Terrorism and Homeland Security found that “law enforcement agencies in the United States consider anti-government violent extremists, not radicalized Muslims, to be the most severe threat of political violence that they face.”¹⁴ And, according to a widely-cited report by the New America Foundation, far more people have been killed in this country since 9/11 by right-wing terrorists than by Islamic extremists.¹⁵

Of course, had the New America Foundation report started its count of deadly attacks a day earlier, the figures would be much different. Just as it would be a mistake to discount the threat of radical-right terrorism, so it would be a terrible mistake to minimize the threat of terrorism from Islamic extremists in any way. As a country, we have made that mistake before. What is required—what is critical—is that we take all forms of terrorism seriously and that we never allow anything to skew the resources that we devote to fighting that which threatens our great country.

Thank you.

Chairman McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Cohen.

The Chair now recognizes himself for questions.

I want to read a couple of quotes from some key administration officials. President Obama said: We have to confront the warped ideologies espoused by terrorists like al-Qaeda and ISIS, especially their attempt to use Islam to justify their violence.

James Comey, just recently said: I have home-grown violent extremist investigations in every single State, and the terror threat has metastasized.

Just recently Jeh Johnson testified this week and said in response to questions: My priority has been focusing on the communities that I believe are most vulnerable, at least some members of the community, to appeals from ISIS, al-Qaeda, and other terrorist groups overseas who are actively targeting individuals in these communities. They can strike at any moment. We are definitely in a new environment because ISIS is effective using social media and the internet to inspire others and possibly reach into the homeland.

Eric Holder said: Horrific terrorist instances, like the tragic shootings at Fort Hood and the Boston Marathon bombing, demonstrate the dangers we face from the home-grown threats. The threat is real. The threat is different. The threat is constant.

As I have said in my opening statement, we spend billions of dollars on trying to prevent and—trying to disrupt these threats, billions to try to stop them, but very little on prevention.

I heard the testimony from Ms. Pandith and Mr. Hughes that you would support putting more attention, more resources, more focus on combating and countering violent extremism. So I want to ask each of the witnesses, do you agree that the administration needs to do more? My bill basically just formalizes, streamlines, and make it a priority within the Department, both international and domestic.

So let me go with each of the witnesses. Do you agree that the administration should make combating violent extremism a higher priority?

¹⁴ “Law Enforcement Assessment of the Violent Extremism Threat,” Charles Kurzman and David Schanzer, Triangle Center for Terrorism and Homeland Security, June 25, 2015, at http://sites.duke.edu/tchhs/files/2013/06/Kurzman_Schanzer_Law_enforcement_Assessment_of_the_Violent_Extremist_Threat_final.pdf.

¹⁵ <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/extremists/analysis.html>.

Ms. Pandith.

Ms. PANDITH. Thank you, sir. Well, I would say a couple of things. One is, from my perspective, this line that we are drawing between domestic and international around the issues specifically related to an AQ or an ISIL or an al-Shabaab, those kinds of extremists, in what I have seen because we are dealing with digital natives, because we are dealing with millennials, this isn't about what is happening in Ohio versus what is happening in Norway. This generation is connected to each other. So that is one thing I definitely wanted to say as we think about this.

It leads to the second piece of this. What is the money that we need? How do we think about this? What we absolutely know in the preventive space—and Seamus has talked a little bit about this—in terms of the communities themselves, is that it cannot come from the top down. The thing that actually work organically are from the ground up. But where the Government can make a difference is to be the convenor and the facilitator and the intellectual partner with ideas that we hear on the ground.

What does that mean in terms of resources? It means that we have proto-tested this. We have seen that this works. Small seed grants from Government can work if we are not putting the American flag over everything, if we find partners on the ground. Frankly, the pools of money that we have both at the Department of State, and I would say probably DHS as well, are not large enough to be able to give that innovation on the ground.

The best ideas to fight this, sir, are not from the U.S. Government. They come from millennials themselves that know what needs to be done. So on the first part of funding, we need that kind of—we need that kind of money. The second in the terms of resources is people. You said it yourself, sir. We don't have enough people thinking about this all day every day and resourced in ways that aren't just, you know, the most significant title out there.

I am talking about specific people in embassies around the world that are thinking about this, are interfacing with the grassroots, as well as people within the Department of State in the regional bureaus that are looking at this. Right now, everybody has a spliced set of things that they are working on, so no one can think about it fully. So long way of answering your question, yes, we do need to do more on the funding side, both in terms of the money and in terms of the actual personnel.

Chairman McCaul. Yes. Thanks to the great work of Mr. Katko, the grants are in this legislation. I think you are absolutely right. When I was a Federal prosecutor, walking into the Muslim community with the FBI had a chilling effect. I don't think that is the best outreach. So I completely agree with your statement.

Mr. Hughes.

Mr. HUGHES. Farah had a very good point on the international side. Let me touch a little bit on the domestic side. So, in 2011, the administration released their CVE strategy preventing violent extremism in the United States. At that point, they argued that you should use existing resources to address this issue. But I think I would argue that the threat has changed from the last 4 years. I think that you need to—if you are going to be serious about CVE, you need to put serious money behind it. I think more Americans

have died in Syria and Iraq fighting for groups like ISIS and al-Nusrah than have been tasked by this administration to work on CVE issues. I think that is unacceptable. I think that needs to be shifted a little bit.

I think CVE budget is woefully inadequate to address this issue. I don't think it is fair to ask two people at the Department of Justice to coordinate 94 U.S. attorney's offices on a National strategy.

Chairman McCaul. That is well put.

Mr. Cohen.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Chairman, I don't have any doubt that the Government's efforts to combat extremism are inadequate, no doubt. The question is, how ought they to be deployed? In terms of the bill that I know that the Chair has offered and considered, I am a little bit reluctant to offer an opinion, of course, on how DHS ought to be organized.

I want to hear on the first instance, as Mr. Thompson indicated, what they think. I also share the concerns that Mr. Hughes and others have expressed about the civil liberty implications of it. I am also a bit skeptical about the ability of the Government to craft credible messages that will persuade people not to become radicalized. I think that is a job, of course, for our churches, a job for our schools, a job, really, for everyone. I think it is important that the Government coordinate the gathering of intelligence. I think it is important that the Government be involved in training efforts at the State and local levels to help State and local law enforcement officials protect themselves and protect the public from extremism.

Chairman McCaul. We definitely need a counternarrative. I haven't seen a counternarrative come out. Whether it is—it has to be led from somebody. I think the administration needs to make this a priority and have a counternarrative to this propaganda out there, and of course, coming at a grassroots level would be ideal. Coming from within the communities themselves would be most effective, led by the efforts within the administration.

So, with that, the Chair now recognizes the Ranking Member.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Again, I think it is unfortunate that we don't have anybody from the administration here to give its side on this issue and impending legislation. I think it is important for us to hear what they are doing, but it is also important for us to hear what they think should be doing. So I hope, at some point, we can get the Department here to say something.

I invited the Department personally on July 9 to be my witness before this committee. Obviously, I have not heard from them up to this point.

So one of the issues that I am concerned about is strategy. If we are going to create a department, what is our strategy? What matrix are we going to use to evaluate the strategy? Whether or not we are tying that to some risk. I think while the issues associated with the Muslim community is just one set of risk in this narrative, I think we need to have a broader message so that if, in fact, the risk analysis says that there is a growing domestic terrorism threat in this country from the right wing, then that department should be nimble enough to go in that direction.

I think, Mr. Chairman, the reason I asked for the hearing is that I have seen the evolution of Garland, Texas, and Charleston, South Carolina, and other places, that I am really concerned about. I just want us to do it right. I don't want us just to set another bureaucracy up and give some money. Let's put some matrix there. Let's put some strategy there, and let's hear from the Department. You know, I think we really ought to have the Department. But since they are not here—and I will ask this to all three of our witnesses: Does it make sense for us to look at strategy for this Department as well as a matrix to evaluate how good we are doing as well as tying risks to whatever harm that might happen here on the homeland?

Ms. PANDITH. Well, I think in terms of the strategy question, sir, one of the things I would say is that, obviously, we do need a strategy that is integrated. As I said in my both written and verbal statement, that for me, as I look at what we have seen and how you can succeed, you used the word "nimble," and it is a great word to use because you need that kind of flexibility because not one size fits all in what is happening in terms of counternarratives, in terms of what you do to prevent no matter what kind of extremism we are talking about.

I do want to say something about the point you raised in terms of other things that are happening in our country. What we know about people who get radicalized is that nothing happens in a vacuum. So, for example, in Europe, when you are seeing the increase of anti-Semitism that is happening all across Europe, it absolutely plays in. That is what I meant by the ecosystem in terms of what the narratives are and how they grow. Similarly, in our country, all of this is connected. What happens here in America, how we speak, the rhetoric, the lexicon that we use, feeds into different communities. So as we think about a strategy, coming from the grassroots, as we think about being nimble, we need to understand that there has to be flexibility, that things are connected. So it is important that we are not just looking at groups like ISIS and what the aftermath is but, actually, the connectivity across different kinds of extremist groups because, indeed, they are learning from each other, and there is a lot of evidence to that as well.

So if you are asking do we need a strategy, yes, sir, we need a very strong and very nimble strategy. But to go back to what we were saying earlier, you have to prioritize this, not just in Government but to the American people, that there is a change that is happening in our country, and we need to do more to stem the radicalization that is taking place.

Mr. THOMPSON. Mr. Hughes.

Mr. HUGHES. Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

I argued there was a strategy released by the administration in 2011 called Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism, and then they have shifted in recent years to do essentially pilot programs in three cities—Boston, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis. So I think they are trying to figure out this kind of broad-based strategy, and I think it is important to have an overarching objective to how you want to do this. But I don't think time is necessarily on our side. I think we have seen, you know, 60 people arrested in the last 6 months just for ISIS. You look at domestic ter-

rorism, you know, sovereign citizen threat is real. The Dylann Roof of the world are concerning.

I don't think that we can wait for—as a former Government person understanding how bureaucrats work—for a strategy we co-ordinated through 10 different departments and released. I think you can do in dual-track. You can have a strategy at the same time you are also trying to work your way through these issues because they are complex issues.

On the question of effectiveness and radicalization factors, humans are complex. There is not a—radicalization isn't a linear process. It isn't a step-by-step thing. You know, if you do this, then you become this and this and this. It is just not that way. I wish it was as a policy maker because it would make life easier. But these are complex issues, and we need to be willing to adjust. Your point about nimbleness is important.

Mr. COHEN. Just a few things that I would add. First, I think the critical fact is—the critical issue is exactly as you have identified it, Mr. Thompson, and that is the allocation of resources across the different threat of—threats that we face. I think too often we have swung one way or the other in response to the latest news. I think it is important that we, as a country, not do that. We have an unfortunate history of doing that in this context.

The other point I would make to elaborate on something that Ms. Pandith said is that not only do we need to take the threat of non-jihadi or non-Islamic extremism as seriously, we need to recognize that the two are connected. If you look at the history of the Boston bombers, for example, they were tremendous consumers of conspiracy theories promoted by right-wing groups, the idea, for example, that 9/11 was an inside job. So I think that it is important not just to address both kinds of threats but to understand the degree to which they are integrated.

The other thing I would mention is that, you know, I know, Mr. Thompson, you mentioned that there are a lot of users on the Stormfront, the leading neo-Nazi website from foreign countries, it is also the case, that you know, the white nationalist movement is not really like the Klan, "Let's return to Jim Crow." It is really a world-wide, you know, ethnic or white nationalism conference or phenomenon. At the time of the Charleston shootings, three of my colleagues were in Budapest at an international conference on white nationalism. What is happening in this country on the—on the domestic terrorism front is very similar to what is happening throughout Western Europe and Greece.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman McCaul. Thank you, Ranking Member.

I just would like to state for the record, the committee did hear from the director of the CVE program at DHS last week in a Classified setting. The Minority did invite him to testify, and, unfortunately, the Department did decline.

I did talk to the Secretary about our efforts and this legislation. He was supportive. You know, and I think, Mr. Hughes, your point is well taken. Time is not on our side. We can't wait to just come up with a study here. We need to move forward. Time is not on our side, and we don't create a bureaucracy. We form one, streamline, and make it a priority.

With that, the Chair now recognizes—
Mr. THOMPSON. Will the gentleman yield?
Chairman McCaul. Of course.

Mr. THOMPSON. You know, I was at that same Classified hearing, and, obviously, we heard two different things. So, you know, I beg to differ.

Now, I talked to the Secretary, and he told me that he had not seen the legislation. Now, I sent him the draft that we had. Now, I don't know if the final draft has gone to him, but at the time I spoke with him, he had not seen it. So I just hope that has been worked out.

Chairman McCaul. Well, you know, we have been working with the Department on this legislation. As I mentioned, they are supportive of making it a priority. I think—I don't understand how anybody in this room cannot be supportive of making countering violent extremism a priority.

The Chair now recognizes—

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Chairman, I just want to—just trying to clarify something. You said that they are supportive, and I try to be as helpful to the administration as I can. So I am trying to say, are they supporting this legislation, or are they supportive of the idea?

Chairman McCaul. Well, that is a fair question. He says he is generally supportive.

Mr. RICHMOND. Okay.

Chairman McCaul. In that sense and particularly, making it a priority.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Supportive of this legislation or supportive of—

Chairman McCaul. He said he is generally supportive of our efforts in this legislation.

Ms. SANCHEZ. In this piece of legislation?

Chairman McCaul. Which we have conferred with the administration on.

The Chair recognizes Mr. King.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank all the witnesses for their testimony.

I would like to discuss directly with Mr. Cohen. I know you and I can have differences which can go on forever. But I would like to try to maybe reach some common ground here today if I would.

First of all, I want to thank you for putting the numbers in context. If you had gone back to prior to 9/11, there would be no comparison in the numbers. But also I think we are leaving out the fact that, for instance, in 2009, there was a subway attack reported by Islamic radicals against New York City, which would have probably resulted in another 400 or 500 people being killed. That was the subway bombing. Just in the last several months, there have been two major raids I am aware of where explosives were taken in New York from Islamic radicals which could have resulted in the deaths of hundreds more. So if we are getting into numbers, I think it is really important to keep a context there.

Also, when you say that twice as many police officers are twice as concerned about domestic terrorists as they are about Islamist terrorists, again, I don't think you will find that in New York City, or Boston, or Los Angeles. In New York City alone, there is 1,000

police officers every day focused on terrorism. Over the Fourth of July, there was 7,000 police officers assigned to threats. Again, I know what Commissioner Bratton did also in Los Angeles and what Commissioner Davis has done in Boston.

Now, having said that, what you are talking about, obviously, domestic threats are real. My concern on this and how we balance this, is the Department of Homeland Security was set up after 9/11 because of the Islamist threats. That is I think the overriding threat as far as numbers, as far as the fact there is internationally directed; it is both overseas, and it is here. Not to minimize any other attacks that are carried out by any other group. So if we do shift emphasis or add an emphasis to white supremacists, the Klan, American Nazi Party, any of these horrible murdering groups, do we, in doing that, by shifting any emphasis at all away from Islamic radicalism, aren't we putting the country more at risk? Should we have more money allocated for what you are talking about?

I am not opposed to focusing the way you want to, but I don't want in any way to be shifting away the emphasis from Islamic terrorism, which is real. Now, the Chairman said that Islamist terrorism is just one set of risks. I don't think there is an equivalency. Again, we are talking about possible nuclear attacks. We are talking about ISIS. We are talking about al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda in the Arabian peninsula. We can go Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, and the fact that there is, I think, the Chairman has said, over 200,000 social media hits every day coming.

So let me ask you, and I am really giving you the opportunity, which I never thought I would be doing, but giving you the opportunity as to how we would balance this by not in any way shifting away from the real threat of Islamic terrorism, which is why the Department of Homeland Security was created, and how we then give extra emphasis to the very real concern that you have.

Mr. COHEN. Well, thank you. First, you and I have always been on the same side. We may have had a slightly different perspective. So I appreciate—it is good to see you again. I have tried to be very careful in my use of the figures. I think that you are right. If we count—if we start the day before 9/11, we have a different story. I tried to acknowledge that point.

I would also point out that there have been a number of plots that have been fortunately broken up by the FBI on white—by white supremacists that would have resulted in the deaths of thousands of people, plots, for example, to spread ricin, plots to poison water supplies. So I don't—I know neither you nor I want to minimize that threat. I hope there is a—or maybe there is an assumption underlying your question to me, and that is that we are in a zero-sum game. That we can't focus on one unless—we can't add resources in one direction unless we take them from another. I am not sure—well, that's not an assumption that I would necessarily make. That is your assumption.

Mr. KING. No, no. That is why I am giving you the opportunity. I say, how do we do it? I am asking you.

Mr. COHEN. You are asking me what? I am sorry.

Mr. KING. What I am saying is that I would not be opposed to adding extra resources to the threats you are concerned about—

Mr. COHEN. I second that.

Mr. KING [continuing]. No way should we be minimizing. In fact, we should probably even be increasing the threat of Islamic—countering the threat of Islamic terrorism. That is all I am saying.

Mr. COHEN. Yeah. No. I understand. I don't think I disagree kind-of with that in principle. I do think it is obvious, though, that the Government's focus went away from the threat of non-Islamic extremism after 9/11.

Mr. KING. If I could just interrupt you. I am not trying to be rude on this, but—

Mr. COHEN. I am sorry. What?

Mr. KING. I said I am not trying to be rude by interrupting you, but my time is running out. When you say the Government emphasis shifted, the Department of Homeland Security didn't exist before 9/11. So if the Government emphasis—that was within the Justice Department. That is not the fault of the Department of Homeland Security that the Justice Department may have shifted its emphasis. We have jurisdiction over the Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. COHEN. My remarks I was speaking about, you know, all Government agencies, quite frankly, not simply the Department of Homeland Security. I did not realize that its mandate was limited solely to protecting the homeland against non-Islamic—against Islamic extremists. That was not my understanding. I thought it had a broader mandate, and I think at one point, of course, it took that other threat a little bit more seriously than it has in the recent years.

Mr. KING. Well, yeah, that is because it was set up in the immediate aftermath of 9/11.

Mr. COHEN. I acknowledge that point, sir. But it wasn't the exclusive threat that the enabling legislation asked them to focus on. Again, we know that that office that was focusing on non-Islamic extremism at the Department was basically dismantled after 2009. I think that was a mistake. I think they—again, I don't want to tell them how they ought to organize themselves, but I think you and I both agree that they ought to devote sufficient resources in light of the reality of the threat.

Mr. KING. I would just say so long as nothing is taken away from the Islamist threat. So maybe we did find some rough agreement, which is what we usually do.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. KING. I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman McCaul. The Chair recognizes Mr. Richmond.

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Chairman, and former Chairman, and I am glad to see the discourse that you had with Mr. Cohen because I think it shows some common ground. But I think today is just a generally sad day and why our approval rating in Congress is so bad. This is not an issue that we disagree on. We have a panel here today who I think is providing expert testimony. We can find common ground. We can make the American people safer, and we have a mark-up scheduled right afterwards. Where is the time for collaboration? Where is the time to digest their testimony, digest what

they are saying, figure out how to put it in a bill, and come to common ground?

Since I have been in Congress, and it is 5 years now, we talk about Sovereign Citizen, who has 100,000 active members, 300,000 dabblers. Well, Sovereign Citizen in my district, they shot up a trailer park, killed two deputies, one a father of a 2-year-old. The other was 32 years old that had five kids. Wounded three other deputies. In the last Congress, we had a million hearings on Islamic terrorism. We begged and we asked, can we just broaden it a little bit so we can deal with other home-grown terrorists—

Chairman McCaul. Will the gentleman yield on that point?

Mr. RICHMOND. Absolutely.

Chairman McCaul. This hearing was in response to the letter from Mr. Thompson to address both international and domestic terrorism. That is the title of the hearing. The bill itself talks about extremism in all forms. It does not say just "Islamist."

Mr. RICHMOND. Well, and I will reclaim my time. But I started mentioning it last Congress, but I think to date—and I am not trying to cast blame because that is Monday morning quarterback.

What I am saying is, where we are right now we can do big things, and we can do it together. But the only way to do it together, I think, is to listen to what they say, listen to both sides, and come with a very carefully crafted bill. My colleague from New York, Mr. King, I think has made a good point, which is they are both important. Home-grown, whether it is radical right or whether it is Islamic terrorism, they both deserve a bunch of attention. We shouldn't just shuffle the cards on the deck to pull resources from one to go to the other. If we are serious about this, it may require finding new resources.

When I hear Mr. Cohen and Mr. King almost agree that if this—if we are serious about this, and I think Mr. Hughes specifically said CVE is woefully inadequately underfunded, Ms. Pandith said that we had to focus on grass-roots, bottom-up, and watch our language. Well, when we listen to them, we don't have time to incorporate that into what we are about to mark up in 30 minutes. So I am just saying if we want to be serious about this, I just don't think that—

Chairman McCaul. Will the gentleman—I have just a little bit of time if the gentleman will yield. We have been working for 6 months—

Mr. RICHMOND. I didn't yield.

Chairman McCaul [continuing]. With the staff on this bill, for 6 months.

Mr. RICHMOND. Well, let me go back to saying I didn't yield.

Chairman McCaul. You said where—

Mr. RICHMOND. Okay. Let's try this one more time. Let's try this one more time. I did not yield.

Chairman McCaul. I yield back.

Mr. RICHMOND. You are the Chairman, and as soon as I finish, you will have time because you are the Chairman.

So all I am saying is I think there is a process that we could do this.

Mr. King and Mr. Cohen went back and forth. In New York, all the police officers wake up—or a thousand wake up every day

thinking about Islamic terrorism and others as their major concern. In police departments all over and probably in the South where I am from, they think about a different form of home-grown terrorism. All I am saying is that for us to do this in this manner this day is the part that saddens me. It may not sadden you, and I am not asking you to agree with me.

But I am just saying today I sit here in agreement with Mr. King that this issue is so important that we may have to find new money so that if we are going to do it, we do it right. I agree with Mr. Hughes. I agree with Mr. Cohen. I agree with Ms. Pandith that we have to treat this like the issue it is because lives are at stake. As we look at Charleston and we look at all of the plots that were prevented, the frustration that I have is that we put so much emphasis on Islamic terrorism, home-grown Islamic terrorism—and the FBI is doing a really good job with it because they are scouring the internet, and they are doing all the things that Mr. King pushed them to do. But if you look at the case of Charleston, he was on the internet. Why couldn't we devote the resources to finding him before he did his dastardly deed and maybe we would be in a different place?

So, Mr. Chairman, I didn't ask any questions.

Now is your time, but thank you for the time, and I yield back.
Chairman McCaul. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Mrs. Miller.

Mrs. MILLER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I certainly appreciate you calling this hearing and expanding it to the scope of not just ISIS and Islamic extremists but domestic terrorism as well. I think, certainly in light of what happened in South Carolina, we were reminded of all of that again.

But I do want to—you know, in May ISIS actually issued a warning that they were planning more attacks in the United States by training soldiers in 15 different States. They actually mentioned my State of Michigan. I come from southeast Michigan. So my question, and, you know, because of the demographics in our area, I am very, very well aware of how important it is that the community has trust with the law enforcement, various Federal agencies, or all of the—whether it is local law enforcement or what have you as you reach out into communities and think about how we can get in early. I was listening to Mr. Hughes' testimony about, you know, it is too bad we couldn't have reached some of these youths before they got on that plane, and so I guess can you both, Ms. Pandith and Mr. Hughes in particular, really sort of flesh out for me a little bit about how we can reach out perhaps a little bit better from the community standpoint to these various groups. Also, perhaps, what is the best—not only just the tools in the outreach, but the agency best suited to do so and how our committee and the Congress needs to think about improving the model for that.

Mr. HUGHES. Sure. I will go first. In terms of engagement, I don't think the U.S. Government needs to replicate the European model of broad-based engagement. I think the Europeans are shifting away towards more of an intervention approach because then you can kind of measure, okay, if this kid changed his mind, if he decided not to cross that legal threshold, it is manageable numbers.

Now, that is fraught with a number of civil rights and civil liberties issues, legal ramifications.

The reason why, and you touched on this a little bit, the reason why this is important, and the debate between domestic and Islamist-inspired terrorism is an important one. Look, I think we are losing fact of something. Countering violent extremism is at its core about that kid. So I spent a number of years going around the country talking to families. I sat in a seat of Riverside Towers basement apartment with 5 mothers of kids that have absconded and went to Somalia, joined al-Shabaab. They are crying, and they are telling me their story about how they wished they could have stopped them. At the end of the day, CVE should be about reaching those kids because this number of 200 that have gone to join ISIS, I think it is significant in terms of 200 families whose lives have been ruined by that. Two hundred fathers without daughters and mothers without sons. I think we lose sight of that when we discuss CVE on this. It becomes a very polarized issue. But I want us to kind of focus back on those 200 kids. Right? Those families I have talked to.

Ms. PANDITH. So I would say a couple of things. The first is, you know, you make a very important point about trust. At base, we have to have trust between communities and law enforcement for a whole host of reasons. But in 14 years since 9/11, we have a lot of data. We know a lot about how people get radicalized. We know the impact of families. We know what has to happen in the Government space, and we know what needs to happen at the grassroots space.

I can't believe I am saying this to you in 2015 because when I was asked to engage on countering violent extremism right after the Danish cartoon crisis in Europe and I was asked to leave the National Security Council to go to the State Department to do this on behalf of our country, we were at a point in 2007 where people were just beginning in Europe to understand the preventing component to this. Everybody was wringing their hands trying to figure out what we were going to do, and each government in Europe was trying to figure out things a different. We were pretty cocky here in America because we thought: Wow. We have the American narrative. It can't happen here.

Where we are today in 2015 is, as Seamus just said, we are looking at the European models going: What has worked? What happened? What can we do over here? I would want to say it is not just about the things that we have learned in Europe compared to where we are in the United States. Every community is unbelievable different. The stories that Seamus was talking about I heard all over the world from parents who are terrified that their kid was going to move in a direction, not because there is something wrong with their kid but because the bad guys had a machinery that its poison was going in off-line and on-line.

Mrs. MILLER. Okay. I don't mean to be rude, but I have, like, 5 seconds left. So I am going to have to interrupt you as well. I would only say I am sorry I don't have time to ask Mr. Cohen the same question because when I saw that picture of that murderer in South Carolina, I thought that kid could be at our local mall. What in the world ever happened to—where did he come from? What

kind of family was he involved with? How does this even happen in America?

I yield back.

Chairman McCaul. Thank you.

The Chairman recognizes Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was given a copy of the letter that we have been discussing. It appears that there might be some misunderstanding in what the response was to Mr. Thompson's letter, but it looks like they have only asked for \$1.8 million to be reprogrammed. But I will move on to my questions.

You know, as we talk about this issue in terms of Islamic radicalism and home-grown, we understand why this committee was created after 9/11. But I never forget, and I keep in my mind constantly Oklahoma, which was before 9/11. So we have to look at all aspects of terrorism, home-grown radicalism, radical Islam. But we should never forget, in the same breath as we mention 9/11, we should mention Oklahoma and Timothy McVeigh.

Let's see. Mr. Cohen, currently the concept of countering violent terrorism is designed to focus on all violent extremist activities. However, Muslim or Islamic groups are exclusively targeted. In the aftermath of the shooting at Emanuel AME Baptist—AME Church in South Carolina, shouldn't the concept of countering violent terrorism be applied more broadly, including domestic, which is why I bring up Oklahoma?

Mr. COHEN. I certainly think that the Government's attention, the law enforcement officials, ought to focus or not lose sight of the type of terror that we saw at Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston. I am not sure, though, that the same investigative techniques or that the investigative techniques that are of questionable value in countering Islamic extremism should necessarily be imported into a different sphere. So I would agree that we need to focus our attention. The question, of course, is, how?

Mr. PAYNE. Okay. Let's see.

To follow up, Mr. Cohen, Government leaders and the media can be very dismissive of domestic terrorism activities and commonly try to categorize incidents such as what happened in Charleston, South Carolina, or 3 years ago in the Sikh Temple in Wisconsin as hate crimes or acts of mentally disturbed. You know, why is it important to label these actions as domestic terrorism, and why do you think there is so much hesitancy to label incidents as domestic terrorism?

Mr. COHEN. Well, again, I think we are living in the shadow of 9/11, and when it is from non-Islamic sources, we don't necessarily—we don't think of it as terrorism. It is odd to me that Director Comey does not call this terrorism. It is obvious, under 18 U.S.C. 2331, Section 5, that it was a terrorist incident at the church. That doesn't necessarily mean that it can be prosecuted as a terrorist incident because there wasn't a weapon of mass destruction used as there was in the Boston bombing. But it does fit the clear definition of terrorism.

The one other point that I would make, and I think Attorney General Lynch made this point, and that is that, by their nature,

hate crimes tend to be terroristic. They send shock waves through the entire community that shares the characteristic by which the victim was selected. We do have a different attitude toward, you know, what we think of as home-grown domestic extremists. Just one small point, I know that Senator Graham on the Senate floor said that Mr. Roof was like—it was like Mideast, Middle Eastern hate, and I am not criticizing him for saying that. I am just saying that it reflected kind of this mindset. We think of it in kind of Islamic terms, and we have a difficult time recognizing it when it comes from people, as Mrs. Miller said, someone who looked like they might show up at a mall.

Mr. PAYNE. My time is up, but as we hear radical Islamists talk about jihad, when what this young man talked about creating—starting race war, would that similarly fall into a jihad?

Mr. COHEN. Well, I mean, he saw himself as a racial warrior. He had this notion of a white genocide going on. It is a common theme in white supremacist circles, not simply in this country but worldwide. So he saw himself as a racial warrior perhaps much as people motivated by distorted notions of Islam see themselves that way.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman McCaul. The Chairman recognizes Mr. Duncan.

Mr. DUNCAN. I want to thank the Chairman for the hearing. You know, to sit here and hear your home State talked about so much because of the tragedy that was there is difficult.

So let me take this opportunity to thank all the Members of the committee and Congress in general for the ones that made the effort to come to South Carolina and attend the funeral services for the Charleston 9. I knew Clem Pinckney. Served with him in the State capital. So, you know, it is personal.

I am willing to acknowledge that the gentleman who—I am not going to mention his name because the shooter isn't worthy of us mentioning his name. He is a murderer. I am willing to acknowledge he was radicalized in some way.

But there are people radicalized in this country through Islamic theology, through right-wing theology, or left-wing theology. There is a lot of examples. I wonder even why we are having this hearing because the President said on May 20: "So I am here today," this is to the Coast Guard, "So I am here today to say that the climate change constitutes a serious threat to global security and an immediate risk to our National security."

If we want to pay for this CVE side of DHS, how about end their involvement in climate change and National security threats and focus on the threats that are real after 9/11? You know, we hear a lot about right-wing extremists, but we never hear of left-wing extremists. But they are there. We hear the name of the shooter in Charleston, but we never hear the name of the shooter here in Washington, DC, the shooter that was unsuccessful, and thank God that he was unsuccessful. But in the fall of 2012, Floyd Lee Corkins, armed with a semi-automatic pistol, 100 rounds of ammo, entered the offices of the Family Research Council here in Washington, intent on murdering—murdering—11 people there. Stopped by a security guard—there wasn't a security guard at Mother

Emanuel—stopped, fortunately. He had with him 15 Chick-fil-A sandwiches. In his own confession, he said he wanted to murder those 11 people and then smear the Chick-fil-A sandwiches on their faces.

The gentleman was radicalized. He was radicalized by a group that is represented on the panel today. I started to object to the witness, but the Southern Poverty Law Center has a hate map. On that hate map, they list the Family Research Council because the Family Research Council supports traditional marriage. The Southern Poverty Law Center disagrees with their political position.

This gentleman in his own confession pointed to that hate map and the Southern Poverty Law Center as the reason for him going to the Family Research Council to commit that crime. You don't know his name because he was unsuccessful. But he was just as intent as the Charleston shooter to murder 11 people.

Do you want to talk about radicalization? Let's talk about both sides because the fact that they even have a hate map using those terminology flies in the face of what I saw in Charleston, South Carolina, where hate wasn't talked about by Mother Emanuel. Hate wasn't talked about by Charleston. Hate wasn't talked about by South Carolina. South Carolina is the epitome of what we should show in this country. When you saw the families of the victims look the perpetrator in the eye and say, "We love you, and we forgive you for your act," the word "hate" wasn't used.

But a hate map pointing to the Family Research Council radicalized a left-wing extremist. I am using that term because we are hearing a lot about right-wing extremists. If you read Mr. Cohen's comments, it is all about right-wing extremism, but his group radicalized a left-wing extremist who wanted to commit murder just the same as the gentleman in Charleston.

So let's be balanced in this, and let's try, as Members of Congress who represent our States, to follow the example of the folks in Charleston that I am proud of because I love every one of you. If we talk about love and forgiveness and following God's path, and we understand that we need to take the log out of our own eye before we try to take the speck out of somebody else's eye, that is a lesson that Christ taught us.

So I don't have any further questions. I appreciate the leniency, Mr. Chairman. I think let's focus on keep America safe from both radicals within our country, regardless of their flavor, and radicals outside this country that want to behead not—they want to behead every one of us as well as the Statue of Liberty because they hate freedom, and they hate America. If we keep our eye focused on the ball in keeping America safe, I think that is the important part of this committee. I think that is why it was formed.

With that, I yield back.

Chairman McCaul. The gentleman's time is expired.

The Ranking Member would like to be recognized.

Mr. THOMPSON. Well, our witness has been referenced in Mr. Duncan's statements, and I think, as a courtesy, we should allow Mr. Cohen an opportunity to respond.

Chairman McCaul. Mr. Cohen is recognized.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you. The Southern Poverty Law Center compiles data every year on groups that we call hate groups. These are

groups that vilify persons because of their race, religion, their sexual orientation, or whatnot. We list the Family Research Council not because it supports traditional marriage. That is not the reason at all.

Mr. DUNCAN. Excuse me, but I can go to the website on my iPad, and I can read your words.

Mr. COHEN. If you would let me finish.

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. COHEN. We list the Family Research Council because it routinely vilifies the gay and lesbian community with known falsehoods. It perpetrates false propaganda. Groups like Focus on the Family that support traditional marriage, we—

Mr. DUNCAN. Let me ask you a question. Was Ben Carson not listed at one time on that map?

Mr. COHEN. He was certainly not listed as a hatemonger. You know, we list—

Mr. DUNCAN. He was targeted by your group. Right?

Mr. COHEN. I am sorry. What?

Mr. DUNCAN. He was targeted by your group as a hatemonger?

Mr. COHEN. That is incorrect. That is incorrect.

Chairman McCaul. The Ranking Member reclaims his time.

Mr. THOMPSON. Mr. Cohen, if you would, just respond to what was said.

Chairman McCaul. If you could, briefly.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you. The statement that we listed the Family Research Council because it is opposed to traditional marriage is incorrect. I would say the—and I would say the Southern Poverty Law Center is no more responsible for what Mr. Corkins did than Martin Scorsese is for the actions of Mr. Hinckley. I think the charges that have been made against us are absurd, quite frankly.

Chairman McCaul. Okay.

The Chair recognizes Mrs. Watson Coleman.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to the panel for being here today. I wanted to just put it on the record, Mr. Chairman, that the information that has been shared by our panelists is really important and is very illuminating to me.

But I really would have wished we had the opportunity to separate these hearings and concentrate on the domestic issues with regard to those individuals who don't represent any relationship to ISIL or al-Qaeda or al-Shabaab or anyone else but who are grown here out the sense of hate and wreak terror on communities because off their religion or their race. I think that we still need that opportunity to do that.

Mr. Cohen, I apologize for that exchange that just took place.

So I am going to ask a few general questions. I think this is very interesting. This is a prelude to what was going to be a mark-up of the bill that I think is a little bit premature here.

Ms. Pandith, you mentioned that this is really important that we counter this violence by working from the bottom up. So you therefore said that it is a good idea to have grants in the community to create opportunities so that youth can be engaged and others can be engaged. I wonder if those are the same kinds of things that I think help communities become healthier like the former PAL

leagues, the academic recreational character-building opportunities where kids get to do something, not be on the streets, kind of focus on what life could be. Is that the kind of thing that you are talking about?

Ms. PANDITH. Thank you. There are two components. One is there are Government grants. Most organizations on the ground don't want to touch the Government with a 10-foot pole. Right? You need to partner with 501(c)(3)s, nonprofit organizations, things that are credible on the ground that make sense for the communities around them right.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. But the money comes from some place, though.

Ms. PANDITH. Right. So that is my second point. What you are seeing right now in terms of the most innovative kind of things are coming from communities themselves. Again, I am speaking from my perspective on these things. We don't have enough money. So there is something—there is a whole problem around fatigue about communities that don't have enough money to be able to do things that we need outside of Government money to do it. But Government can push outside entities to give money toward their things.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Okay. So you are not suggesting that this consolidated CVE effort use any of its \$10 million to—

Ms. PANDITH. No. I am saying both. I am saying both.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. For that purpose, though.

Ms. PANDITH. Because the American Government can—yes.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. So do you think that, and, Mr. Cohen, you might want to respond to this too. Do you think that that same kind of activity in the local communities, bringing together groups, being the, you know, engagements, being educational, recreational, and job training, do you think those kinds of things work in both situations, both with the individuals that you are talking about that are most vulnerable and with the individuals that we see creating the terror domestically and are domestic grown and are, you know, directed at people based on their race, creed, color, and national origin and ancestry, et cetera? I ask that of both of you.

Mr. COHEN. I think the answer is yes. I mean, you know, you look at someone like the Charleston shooter, and we have an alienated young man, a high school dropout, and so, you know, kind-of, what happened there? You know, what I wonder, though, is what is the role of the Government versus the role of our schools, the role of our churches? You know, at Southern Poverty Law Center, we try to provide free classroom materials to every school in the Nation to try to give teachers tools they can use to reach every kid in their classroom. So and there is no question that it is a job not just for the Government but a job for all of us.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. So can you tell me something about the socioeconomic status of the young man who created that terrorist act at Mother Bethel? Do you know?

Mr. COHEN. Well, a little bit. I understand that he was from, your know, the product of a divorced home, that he was very much a loner. He spent a lot of time by himself, that he dropped out of high school. The one thing I would say, though, it is obvious from reading his manifesto is that we are not talking about a stupid kid. He was obviously highly intelligent.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. So he is another illustration of what might work if we could create jobs programs and community programs, part of healing communities, apprenticeship programs—

Mr. COHEN. If there is some way to reach young people like that, it would be great. Absolutely.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. I am very concerned about the radicalization of these very young people. Very concerned about it. But I am also concerned about the 20-year-old, the 20- or 21-year-old, and it seems to me that we are not doing enough to put programs and opportunities in our community to make our communities healthier, whether or not it is recreation, academics, education, character building, community relations, we need to be focusing on putting our efforts there. I am sorry.

Ms. PANDITH. That is absolutely right. But there is no profile with socioeconomic or education levels around the kind of radicalization we are talking about.

But the other thing is, beyond what you just said, beyond those kinds of programs, there have to be very specific programs that are dealing with a young person along the conveyor belt of radicalization, which doesn't have to do with leadership training or other things that you have described.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. So we really need to examine evidence-based approaches in programs. We recognize that the European model PReVENT, or whatever it is called, isn't necessarily working. We recognize that the pilot programs in Los Angeles and Boston and someplace else aren't necessarily the approach that we should—because we are getting a lot of feedback that these are not fair applications and these are not particularly yielding what we need in order to make our homeland safer. Is that a fair assessment? That is a yes or no.

Ms. PANDITH. No. It is not a fair assessment, but I know you are running out of time. I would just simply say one-off programs are not going to do enough. There has to be far more that is going on—

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. So my question, I guess, is shouldn't we be prepared to listen to an array of programs and approaches that are evidence-based and work in collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security before we move forward and present legislation that reorganizes an effort around what we think is needed as opposed to what we know?

Ms. PANDITH. We have 14 years of evidence and experience, and we know what to do. It is possible to do a lot more than we are doing. I don't think we need to sit around figuring out what might work. We have lots of evidence from around the world and—

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Hughes.

Mr. HUGHES. I would echo her thoughts on this.

I would also say that I don't think that Europe ends at the United Kingdom. I think there is a lot of examples from Denmark and Germany and Sweden where you can take CVE programs that work.

Ms. Watson Coleman. Thank you.

Mr. HUGHES. We also have the benefit of PReVENT's 10-year track record—

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Thank you.

My last question, I know I am really over here, but I thank you for the Chairman's indulgence.

Mr. Cohen, does this proposal do what it needs to do as it relates to our concerns about those who are radicalized differently and are directed towards hate crimes of minorities and religious minorities?

Mr. COHEN. I don't have the same experience that Ms. Pandith or Mr. Hughes has. I am a little skeptical, and I do think that it is important that we have evidence-based programs.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Thank you, Mr. Cohen.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your indulgence.

Chairman McCaul. Thank you. I just want to make a point. I think we agree on the same premise.

You asked me in a prior hearing: Mr. Chairman, I would like to explore what more can be proactively done in identifying and intervening at an earlier stage. That is all I am trying to do with respect to this hearing and with respect to this legislation.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Chairman, if I just might—

Chairman McCaul. The Chair recognizes—

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN [continuing]. Respond.

Chairman McCaul. Sure.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. I appreciate that. I am just thinking that we are moving a bit prematurely and that the pathway that are you are discussing is absolutely on track. The fact that we are moving so quickly from this to that, I think, is what gives me tremendous pause. I think that we have an opportunity to do it better. Thank you very much for hearing me.

Chairman McCaul. Well, and I respect your opinion.

Again, we have been working for 6 months on the bill.

But, with that, Mr. Perry is recognized.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Cohen, I was heartened by a portion of your testimony where you talked about families and religious institutions kind-of taking the lead and being a part of the solution. I couldn't agree with you more, at least as far as being part of the solution. But I do think that there is a role for the Department of Homeland Security to play in leading. I think that this hearing is to discuss that very fact.

Now, just to kind of give you a vignette to have a colloquy with you, if you were having some work done on your home on your roof, and your roof was open. You left for the evening or something for dinner. You came back. You saw storm clouds brewing on the way home. But as you got home, you notice your house is on fire. So do you call your roofer, or do you call the fire department?

Mr. COHEN. I would call the fire department.

Mr. PERRY. I agree with you completely. So we are on the same page. So let me talk to you about one other thing before I get into some statistics.

This I am reading from a website: "Today Don Black," which I think you said you are aware of, "Don Black struggles with a continuing decline in site visitors, chronic financial problems, and his own health issues." That is Don Black from Stormfront. Right?

Mr. COHEN. Yes.

Mr. PERRY. That is on your website.

Mr. COHEN. I am sure you are right.

Mr. PERRY. Yeah. But you just sat here and said in your testimony that their visitors to the website is increasing, but your website says they are decreasing.

Mr. COHEN. That is not what I said. What I said was the number of registered users of Stormfront had increased by 50 percent over the last 5 years from below 150,000—

Mr. PERRY. So it is increasing.

Mr. COHEN [continuing]. To over 300,000.

Mr. PERRY. So it is increasing.

Mr. COHEN. The number of registered users. That is what I said.

Mr. PERRY. But it says here “decline in site visitors.”

Okay. Anyhow, look, we are talking about an issue of violent extremism, period. There is a prioritization, and there is a matter of scale. We already agree today that with the house fire burning scenario. Right? We kind-of agreed that there is a concept of scale here. So, in that, you, I am sure, know that ISIS-linked plots against Western targets has tripled in 2015. Home-grown jihadi terror plots in the United States has tripled in the past 5 years. Foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq has gone up 80 percent. Arrests of ISIS supporters in America is up five-fold. I continue. More than 4,000 Westerns and 200 Americans have traveled or attempted to travel to join Islamist terrorists in Syria. It has doubled in the last year. We have got 18 countries or territories, including a long list of the 18 which have ISIS-linked or al-Qaeda-linked operations in their country.

I think what we are trying to say here is, is that we see a problem that is growing, and it is incumbent upon us to do something about it. In a hearing that I had last week on homeland security, they listed one of the major threats as climate change. It might be a threat. The question is, is it the business of this Department of Homeland Security when they ask for funding for climate change but don't ask for funding—or haven't asked for funding—for countering violent extremism, and is that the right thing to do? This legislation seeks to clarify and remedy that.

Now, also in the remaining time that I have, I agree with you when you were flummoxed, when you were vexed by the fact that it was not listed as terror in South Carolina. But I want to just make sure we broaden the conversation and add the scale to it. It was also not listed as terror at Fort Hood. Also not listed as terror when a gentleman, I don't know if I will call him that, when a terrorist in Oklahoma beheaded a women and was on his way to beheading another one. That is why we are having the hearing, sir. That is why this is an issue. So we can focus the efforts of the taxpayer, of the Federal Government, appropriately.

Finally, and with the time remaining, sir, with all due respect, the Family Research Council has an opinion that I imagine you disagree with, and that is the beauty of America. We can disagree. But do they advocate for violence associated with their opinion?

Mr. COHEN. Are you asking me now?

Mr. PERRY. Yes, I am.

Mr. COHEN. I have never said otherwise. That is correct. We have never said they advocate violence.

Mr. PERRY. Okay. So they don't advocate for violence. So we understand there are differences of opinion. That is the great thing about America. But when we are talking about opinions that are linked to violence, and so there is a credibility issue when the Family Research Council is listed as a terrorist organization—

Mr. COHEN. Well, we didn't list them as a terrorist organization.

Mr. PERRY. Well, as a hate organization.

Mr. COHEN. You know, there are lots of organizations that we list as hate organizations because they vilify people for immutable characteristics. The one thing I would point out is that when you constantly vilify kind-of the LGBT community, is it really a surprise that that is the community that is most likely to be victimized by hate crimes in our country? I don't think so.

Now, does Tony Perkins say we ought to go out and beat gay people? Of course not. But when you describe gay people as vile, as disgusting, when you put out false propaganda about them, you know, I think it doesn't help.

Mr. PERRY. Well, again—

Mr. COHEN. If I could say one last thing.

Mr. PERRY. Absolutely, sir.

Mr. COHEN. We have never, as I explained, as Mr. King pointed out, and I appreciate it, we have never tried to minimize the threat of Islamic extremism ever. You know, so I think much of what—I am not sure—I felt like there was a straw man that you were attacking and that wasn't me.

Mr. PERRY. No. I am not here to attack you. I just want to make sure the record is clear and that the intent and the motivation for this hearing, for this mark-up, for this bill is clear, is that we want to deal with violent extremism wherever it comes from.

Mr. COHEN. I think you should—

Mr. PERRY. To also acknowledge that there is a matter of scale. There is a prioritization. In the military, we have a 50-meter target, you have got a 300-meter target, you have got 1,000-meter target. The 50-meter target with the weapon that is firing at you is a little more important than 1,000-meter target is what we are saying. The stats that I gave you show that we have a 50-meter target that we need to address. That is the point.

With that, I thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you.

Chairman McCaul. The Chair recognizes Mr. Keating.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to thank the witnesses. It is always great to see Ms. Pandith, whose uncle, deceased uncle, was a dear friend of mine. He said the—we worked together when he was setting up the Islamic Center of New England. Thank you for your continued work in particular.

We have also had you as a witness in our subcommittee on Foreign Affairs, and there is an overlap of many issues here. I must say, because I am not going to miss an opportunity, when anyone dismisses climate change and the fact that it is not important to violence in the world and wars, I think we should all take cognizance that that is not true. It is one of our major issues, but the same with scale of issues.

As a former prosecutor, we can talk about scale all we want, but if you are the victim or your family is the victim or your community is a victim of any kind-of, this kind-of violent action, scale doesn't matter too much.

But I do want to touch base on an approach that we can take that I think is clear to deal with all these issues, and that is how much work should we be doing—should the Government be doing on trying to give resources and information to family members. You know, the first educator and the primary educator of any child is their mother. I think there is—we have much more to do, although we are doing some things in this regard, to train mothers and parents, family members, to spot signs of extremism, however that extremism is manifested or that radicalization. So I would like to ask Ms. Pandith, what could we be doing more in that particular area?

Ms. PANDITH. Thank you, Mr. Keating. It is a pleasure to see you again.

Very quickly, I would say two things on the issue of women, and that is why I included it in my testimony. We have not—that has been a black hole for our Government. We haven't seen how women get radicalized, and we are just catching up to that right now, frankly, and it is very, very dangerous when all of a sudden we see three young girls in Denver try to make their way to Syria, and everybody in America is surprised that this is happening. Their bad guys are trying to recruit boys and girls. We need to understand that, and that is happening globally.

But you said something very important, and that is a mother is a child's first teacher. Toward that end, women can be used in two ways: No. 1, we need to understand how they are getting radicalized. Therefore, the kind of counternarratives that are going to work specifically for them. But we also need to mobilize them into a movement to push back against the ideology of the extremists because they see what is happening to their children first. What is happening inside of a home matters.

The State Department actually partnered with me and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue on an initiative called Women and Extremism for specifically that reason. You will remember that our Government also helped seed Sisters Against Violent Extremism, SAVE, the SAVE network, for the same reasons. But I do think, sir, we need to do a whole lot more to understand specifically what is happening with women, not just in our country but around the world.

Mr. KEATING. Yeah.

Yes, Mr. Hughes.

Mr. HUGHES. I just want to react a little bit on that. You brought up Denver. This time last year I was in Denver at the invitation of the imam of Abu Bakr mosque and the U.S. Attorney and the FBI because three of their girls had jumped on a plane and ended up in Frankfurt and got turned around. Well, their father had called, you know, every phone number in the Denver phone book until he finally got a council member who then knew an FBI agent who could then call Frankfurt authorities.

So we went out to Denver, and we sat at the mosque with a room full of about 150 fathers and mothers and delivered what we called the Community Awareness Briefing. The Community Awareness

Briefing was essentially an information awareness briefing. You explain to people how ISIS and related groups use the internet to radicalize and recruit kids. Because at the end of the day, that 15-year-old girl, that 16-year-old girl, and that 17-year-old girl, they were learning what they wanted to learn on-line. The only echo chamber they had was those people on-line. They had no other avenue of people that were saying: This doesn't sound right. You should come pull it back.

We also put it in context too. So our Community Awareness Briefing was part of a larger presentation. So we had a school official give an internet safety workshop because, let's be honest here, a parent doesn't really understand what ask.fm is or Kik or any of those type of things. Let's put that in context of cyberbullying or sexting, and ISIS as another range of threats that you have to be worried about as a parent on-line. Put it in context like that.

I would also say that the Community Awareness Briefing, though, is, again, going back to those one-off events. So we have to figure out a way to scale that up a little bit. Train State and locals, train trusted community partners to deliver that kind of information. The Federal Government can play a role of updating that information for communities.

Mr. KEATING. Yeah. I also believe that—associate with Ms. Pandith's remarks, that much of this isn't new. A group of us were in the Hollings Center in Europe looking at, you know, the root causes. The idea that we are getting pretty good—or at least in Boston recently, we are fortunate that two other incidents were thwarted by good law enforcement. But we have had some success swatting mosquitoes. We have to dry that swamp up. That is going to be done through education and the kind of things we are talking about here. I would just say that the same things I studied years ago on juveniles and juvenile delinquency and getting involved with crimes, where this is not a loss of a father figure in a household and all those other issues were being addressed at the Hollings Center when we were talking about some of the real root causes of this.

I think we have a lot of work to do, but we can build on it. I agree, as a final statement, that there while we are digging in on these issues more and more, we should be moving forward at the same time because we do know enough where we can be effective and deal with these issues.

I yield back.

Chairman McCaul. The Chair recognizes Mr. Katko.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the testimony of all the panelists here today.

Mr. Cohen, I have a couple of questions for you, and you don't have to worry because we are not going to get into an argument. I promise you there.

The first question.

Mr. COHEN. Nothing about the fire department either.

Mr. KATKO. No, no fire department.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you.

Mr. KATKO. Quickly, just from a basic premise, you would agree that trying to do something to counter violent extremism either from the Islamic side or the domestic side is a good idea overall.

Mr. COHEN. Of course.

Mr. KATKO. Okay. So and, of course, the next step is your concern is that there might be too much of a focus on the Islamic side to the detriment of domestic terrorism. Is that correct?

Mr. COHEN. That is among my concerns, yes.

Mr. KATKO. Okay. So that is something we got to work out going forward. Right? But if we could somehow balance that all out, do you think this is a good idea?

Mr. COHEN. Do I think what is a good idea?

Mr. KATKO. Countering violent extremism, developing a program for both domestic and Islamic violent extremism.

Mr. COHEN. If we can do that successfully without violating people's civil rights and have a program that is effective, of course.

Mr. KATKO. Okay. Now, yeah, you mentioned civil rights. That is a good thing. It is a good segue for what I want to talk about next. I am proposing an amendment to this bill which would provide a grant program at DHS. The grant program would allow community leaders such as yourself or others from all over the country, whether it be a domestic- or Islamic-based program, to apply to the Department of Homeland Security to get grants to have CVE-type activities in their home towns. As a general premise, I take it all you panelists would agree that is a good idea.

Mr. COHEN. I wouldn't have any problem with that as an experiment, of course.

Mr. KATKO. Right. Exactly. Now, informing the program, we have individuals in my amendment proposed to be involved in formulating this program, Department of Homeland Security and the new office that the Chairman's bill establishes as well as the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. So I take it having the input from the Civil rights and Civil Liberties is a good idea as well. Right?

Mr. COHEN. Yes. I think also, of course, before I would do any of these things, I would ask the Department of Homeland Security what they think about it. You are asking me, just a private citizen from the Southern Poverty Law Center. I have given you my opinion. I would want to know what the Department of Homeland Security thinks, of course, as well.

Mr. KATKO. Right. Of course. Of course, so you want to get the input of everybody, but having the input of civil rights is a good idea.

Mr. COHEN. Of course.

Mr. KATKO. Okay. All right. I appreciate that.

I just want to address one other concern about you that you voiced earlier about perhaps disparity with respect to how we treat domestic terrorism versus Islamic terrorism at post-9/11. Are you familiar with what is called the Joint Terrorism Task Forces across this country?

Mr. COHEN. Yes. Somewhat, yes.

Mr. KATKO. Isn't it fair to say that they were formed after 9/11?

Mr. COHEN. Yes.

Mr. KATKO. Isn't it fair to say that part of their marching orders included not just investigating Islamic-based threats but also to investigate and indeed prosecute domestic terrorism as well?

Mr. COHEN. There have been prosecutions, of course.

Mr. KATKO. So there have been new things put in place after 9/11 to focus on a domestic terrorism front as well.

Mr. COHEN. Yes. But there is also, I think, a degree to which it is undeniable that the Government has taken its eye off that threat after 9/11. I don't think there is any dispute about that either.

Mr. KATKO. Well, I can look at it from the prism from which I operated over the last 20 years in my career as a Federal prosecutor, and I helped stand up Joint Terrorism Task Forces, you know, in my district, and assisted them on occasion. I know that if a case came to me for domestic terrorism, it was never ever ignored, ever. In fact, people were prosecuted on a regular basis for domestic terror acts, not just that had nothing to do with Islamic radicalization. That has happened across this country on a regular basis. Hasn't it?

Mr. COHEN. Of course.

Mr. KATKO. Okay. So this whole dialogue that somehow we are not paying attention to domestic terrorism, it is a matter of semantics or a matter of degree, but at the same token, we are not ignoring it.

Mr. COHEN. I don't think we are ignoring it completely, but, you know, I think the history at the Department of Justice is pretty clear. You know, they had a task force after Oklahoma City, and it simply stopped meeting after 9/11. It stopped meeting for 13 years. I would say that is proof that the Department took its eye off that ball. A group of U.S. attorneys, Conner Eldridge, the attorney from the Western District of Arkansas, was instrumental in getting that back on track. But we had a 13-year hiatus, and that seems problematic to me.

Mr. KATKO. It is fair to say, though, that some of that slack had been picked up by the Joint Terrorism Task Forces, which didn't exist before 9/11?

Mr. COHEN. I suppose some of it had to.

Mr. KATKO. Sure. Okay. All right. Well, I appreciate that.

I yield my time back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you.

Chairman McCaul. The Chair recognizes Mrs. Torres.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank the three of you for being here today.

Ms. Pandith, I had an opportunity to hear you at a training that we had for new Members of Congress. I think it was back in November. I have asked the FBI to join my law enforcement community in my district to talk about, you know, this specific issue. I am a little bit disappointed that we continue to only talk about Islamic issues when the biggest threats that we have in my community and more urgent in my community are the drug cartels, are the gangs that are recruiting our very, very young kids and ordering them to shoot at police officers as a way to join a gang.

So, you know, from your perspective, I think that I heard you say that there is no profile; there is no social/economic link. I think because we have seen the diversity of local home-grown terrorists, but there is a common denominator. That common denominator is hate, whether it is racial, religious, political, that is a common denominator that these have. What is your advice in putting together

this type of community engagement, this type of community training, for our law enforcement, understanding that, you know, I spent, by the way, 17 years as a 9-1-1 dispatcher? People call because they have issues with their children that they feel are at risk. There is nothing that we can do for them because they haven't committed a crime.

So there is a lot of frustration there in the community that, why should we wait until someone commits a crime, you know, to engage them in a dialogue? I would like to hear a perspective from the three of you if it is possible.

Ms. PANDITH. It is nice to see you again. I would agree. Obviously, there is an "us and them" narrative that has taken hold of our country that has actually gotten more acute in the last few years, and we are seeing it play out in all kinds of ways. So this is by no means saying you need to focus only on what is happening from AQ or ISIL or al-Shabaab.

But I want to put things in perspective, and everything—we all come to the table with our own thing. There are 1.6 billion Muslims in the world. That is one-fourth of our planet. Sixty-two percent of that number is under the age of 30. That is almost a billion people. That is the pool from which the bad buys are recruiting. Because they are digital natives, for all the things that we have talked about in the last, you know, hour-and-a-half, it makes it really present to me.

I see things happening—you know, Mr. Keating was talking—I mean, I am from Massachusetts. I was—I had been on Boylston Street. That was very personal to me what happened at the Boston Marathon. But I also am a world citizen in the sense of I can see the connectivity with this millennial generation around the world. So it is a very real threat to me. I think that this us/them hatred if you want to call it, the narrative, manifests in a whole lot of ways. I think America can and should do better in decreasing the hate as you defined it.

But I think to put a really direct response to you, you can't just do it from Government. It has to be communities themselves that are actually doing a whole host of things to decrease that sort-of high-pitch shrill.

Mrs. TORRES. So are we putting the cart before the pony here by not waiting for the reports to be published on helping us identify these common factors?

Mr. HUGHES. I don't think you can wait. I think that last point you made about the space between before an illegal act is important because I don't think it is fair to ask a family member or a Government official to watch a train wreck happen in slow motion and know you can't do anything in between. Two weeks ago, I was in Dulles. I met a father whose daughter—

Mrs. TORRES. I am going to stop you there because my experience is very different in the community.

The real-life experience is around budgets, and we do not have enough personnel to go chase these types of calls.

Mr. Cohen, what can you say about—a response from you, please?

Mr. COHEN. I am not sure I have a lot to add. You know, we are talking about extraordinarily complex problems. I think, you know,

it is important, having studied them very, very carefully, I do think that, you know, there are a lot of common problems that you talked about with gangs and people drifting into white supremacy and who are maybe drifting into radical Islam. We need to wrap sometimes services around folks who are at risk of going down that path.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you. I just don't want to lose this conversation around—only around Islamic or white supremacists because there is a lot more happening in our communities. Thank you.

Chairman McCaul. The Chair recognizes Mr. Walker.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Pandith, I have been very impressed looking through your testimony and the amount of years and research you have put into this. I think you have done a great job in sharing this. I would like to ask you, in fact, in your testimony you discuss, "credible voices" needed to carry out the counter-messaging efforts into these extremists and these terror groups, whether they be domestic terrorism or whether they be those of international, radicalized, whatever it might be. Would you be able to expound maybe in your opinion, when you talk about credible voices, what is that profile that we are looking for when it comes to those people that can get that message back?

Ms. PANDITH. Thank you for your kind words. Credible voices, they come in all shapes and sizes, and there is no profile for them either. What is really important is we go really, really local, and we don't take Government saying, we think we know what a credible voice is. You have to ask communities themselves.

As a result, you are seeing all kinds of voices that, at first glance, people think: Are you kidding me? A hip-hop artist, an athlete, a graffiti artist, they are going to make a difference to some kid not moving along the conveyer belt of radicalization? In fact, that is true. If you go to the neighborhoods, if you go to the communities and you ask them, what are the voices? Who are the people that make sense? Those are the voices that we need to lift up.

The mistakes we made right after 9/11, sir, or that we thought that the guy with the longest beard and the highest hat was the one that was the person that was going to be able to tell that young kid they shouldn't be bad. It doesn't work like that. These are digital natives. These are young kids who learn from each other. So a credible voice is someone local, organic, and makes sense for that neighborhood. What may make sense here in Washington, DC, may not make sense in McLean, Virginia.

Mr. WALKER. Do you feel the United States should find a way to maybe help support, even if it is not necessarily funding, but maybe an awareness for those that are nonprofits, religious organizations, at building some of those bridges?

Ms. PANDITH. I couldn't agree more. That is the biggest mistake we have made. There are all kinds of efforts, thousands in fact, around the world of people who are doing exactly that. There is no money, and there is also fatigue, sir. There is a great deal of fatigue because those people who have been trying to raise money to do it on their own, they don't have enough money, and they keep hitting their head against the wall saying: This is a really good

program. It is going to work organically, but they have no funds to support it.

Mr. WALKER. I can speak only to my experiences, and we have worked in the inner cities of Cleveland, New York, Baltimore, places like that, trying to talk about hope and opportunity. What—under this topic of credible voices, I would like to circle back just a little bit in the time that I have remaining and talk about some unfair practices that discredit some good voices. In fact, I believe Mr. Cohen, under oath today, that you said Tony Perkins said gays were vile and disgusting. I am concerned about those kind of comments, which only increase the amount of tension between the different groups.

But also something earlier that was mentioned, and I just want to make sure that we are clear on this record because I think from a philanthropist and someone who has brought a lot of good things to our medical community is Dr. Ben Carson. I believe you said earlier that you did not list him as an extremist in an organization. But let me read your words, if I could, from earlier this year or from a statement released by your organization. It says: In October 2014, we posted an extremist file of Dr. Ben Carson. This week as we have come under intense criticism for doing so, we have reviewed our profile and have concluded that it did not meet our standards, so we have taken it down and apologized to Dr. Carson for having posted it. We have also come to the conclusion that the question of whether a better research profile of Dr. Carson should or should not be included in our, “extremist files,” is taking attention from the fact that Dr. Carson has made a number of statements that we believe most people would conclude as extreme.

My concern is, is that when you guys put these kinds of labels on people as the Member Duncan talked about earlier, sometimes these groups that are reading this, they are inspired by this stuff. As we have talked with Ms. Pandith about credible voices, I think we all have responsibility making sure that we are not overshooting a runway when listing those as extreme when if we were to look a little closer, they are not in the extreme.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman McCaul. I thank the gentleman.

The Chair recognizes Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me also add my appreciation to the witnesses that are here, and let me thank both Mr. Thompson and Chairman McCaul. Mr. Thompson for calling this hearing, and Mr. McCaul joining in and for the addition.

Mr. Cohen, we have interacted certainly over the years.

Ms. Pandith, we have certainly interacted by your service in the administration and most recently your participation in this effort by the administration of countering violent extremism.

I happen to believe that there is a pathway of commonality. Just as, if I might deviate, as we begin to look at criminal justice reform and raise the question of issues dealing with law enforcement, someone might take the viewpoint the Nation is against law enforcement or groups are against law enforcement, and that is not true. They are the finest men and women in this Nation who put their lives on the line every day, but all of us can be subject to being better and finding a pathway to being better.

I think the effort by my Ranking Member is to make our approach to countering violent extremism one that is worldly and that is responsive to a myriad of issues that may come before us.

So let me start with a question to you. I think your testimony indicated that the youth that are engaged around the world and those who may be radicalized here, there is a sense of trying to be validated. Maybe you can expand on that because, how do we pierce that particular veil? How do we get in front of them being validated in some other way? The other is that I am concerned, is that in my course of representing constituents, I have dealt with a lot of groups that range from the array of communities from Pakistani community to the Arab community and then subsets. When I say that, people are from Egypt, people are from Kuwait, Palestinians, and others, and they all are worthy of recognizing efforts that are being made. For example, there is CAIR. I ask the question, and my concern is, do you read in this legislation any exclusion? Is there going to be some litmus test to leave groups out because someone has a disagreement or someone accused a group of some activity? When I say that, the group, somebody that had their name in the group, and they were individual actors. So if you can answer that. Let me jump to Mr. Cohen just so that the bell doesn't ring on me for my questions.

But let me say that the moment in history always seems to suggest that we are taking a moment in history, and we are imploding it, or we are blowing it up. I think it is important to note that Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, and different religious groups, people of Jewish faith have had a constant attack over a period of history. When I say that, not—when I say that some will take it out of context and say—and I am saying people have been attacked every day. No. I am saying it has been an underbelly of this country. It is only when moments like Mother Emanuel come, that there is a forum to be able to speak. For if we spoke of every discriminatory act against us, most of our colleagues and people and constituencies, would say, what? They live in complete horror and fear or complaints.

So I think it is important to note that this is a moment, but you have documented over the period of time. I have been studying Jeff Davis—Jefferson Davis, who is the President of the Confederacy, and he, in his era, continues, that generally born, the slaves are barbarian masters. These are kinds of names that have been in America's psyche or fabric, and they have lived on. The flag has lived on, the rebel flag, and the three boys in Mississippi.

But we, as Americans and happen to be African Americans, have gone on to live. We have taken the moment, and then you have seen us go on to live. What we are saying now and what I believe my Ranking Member is saying, that if you are going to look at the issues of terrorism, I think Mrs. Torres was talking about gang activities, if I heard her correctly, or other instances of terrorism, we are just saying, open it up. Just as someone said this is a moment for a discussion on race. It is not just a moment; it is that a horrific incident occurred, and we are now saying that all of those who mourn that didn't look like me, what a celebration, now we can come together and talk about what we have experienced over our wonderful life here past slavery in this country.

So my question to you is as the *New York Times* has said, and I just want to read this: Non-Muslim extremists have carried out—a *New York Times* article dated June 24—have carried out 19 such attacks since September 11, terrorist attacks, in the latest count compiled by Mr. Sterman a New America program associate. But by comparison, by comparison—and let me correct that. Non-Muslim extremists carried out 19 such attacks since September 11. By comparison, 7 lethal attacks are carried out by Islamic militants in the same period. No one would ever have paid attention to this statistic, but it is real. Obviously, people died at the hands of non-Muslim extremists.

Mr. Cohen, I am not asking you to be the Department of Homeland Security. You have done this work valiantly. Is it worthy of expanding the concept of countering violent extremism to a myriad of groups that you have covered over the years of your work? If I could get—be indulged for Ms. Pandith and Mr. Cohen to answer those questions.

Mr. COHEN. I think it is essential, Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Ms. Pandith, we will come to you next on the question I asked.

Mr. COHEN. I think it is essential. I think that these are teachable moments, and before complacency, until we all fall back—until we would have to worry about going back and becoming complacent, we have to take advantage of these moments and examine ourselves. I think that all forms of extremism ought to be taken seriously. I have never said that one is more important than the other. I have never said that one is comparable to the other. I think it is really critical, though, that we don't ignore any of them.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Ms. Pandith.

I thank the Chairman and Ranking Member, for indulging.

Ms. PANDITH. You asked about, your words, validating youth. I would just tweak that slightly. It is really about an identity crisis that's happening to these young people under the age of 30.

So the bad guys are filling the vacuum when they are asking questions about who they are. So what we have to do is to flood the marketplace with counternarratives to the narratives of the extremists in a multitude of ways so that these young youth have a place to go. This isn't just Government doing this. This is what we were talking about in terms of communities themselves finding ways to be able to tap into what is happening to these young youth.

Furthermore, you asked about leaving different groups out. You know that I worked in Government traveling around the world engaging in Muslims. What is critical and very, very important is that we don't make a hierarchy of who the most Muslim Muslims are. That means in our country too, that you open up the diversity of Muslims across America, you listen to all voices, and finally, you don't just listen to a couple of groups in America that try to speak for the most diverse group of Muslims anywhere in the world, and they live here in America.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Just a quick, but it means that if these advocacy groups are there, you don't exclude them either?

Ms. PANDITH. No.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. They have a place at the table?

Ms. PANDITH. They do.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. But you just want it to be expanded. I assume you are not against the domestic terrorism concept dealing with right-wing extremists being expanded as well?

Ms. PANDITH. Absolutely not.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the Ranking Member and Chairman for their indulgence.

I yield back.

Chairman McCaul. I thank the gentlelady. Let me just say, I completely agree. That is why we scheduled the hearing to focus, not just on foreign terrorism, international, but domestic. That is precisely why this legislation—and you and I have talked about the bill itself before, it expands the role of the Department to all forms of extremism, and I think that is an important point to make.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Donovan.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate you holding this hearing to address the need to counter the growth of violent extremists in the United States. I think everyone here, my colleagues and the witnesses agree that the approach so far has failed to stem the instances of violent terror plots both domestic and internationally.

I have a few quick questions I just want to ask—because I know we are going to vote in a little bit—to the entire panel.

I heard you say, Ms. Pandith, about the credible voices. That, to me, sounds general. You get someone, a hip-hop artist or something. I don't know if this monster that created this horrific event in Charleston would have listened to anybody. But closer to home, and I don't know what his parental situation was, but first of all, how does Government help to identify these people? Second, once they are identified, what do we do?

Kathleen Rice and I were prosecutors before this. John Katko was. Many times families come to us and say: My kid hasn't done anything yet, but my kid is on the verge of something. I think on a parochial level and a lower level, as you said before, is where we can intervene. So, No. 1, how could Government help identify possible people before they commit a horrific event? Second, what is this best intervention that we could help people to prevent another horrific event, either what happened in Boston or what happened in Charleston?

Ms. PANDITH. The most credible voices on the planet are former extremists of all kinds who can tell their stories and explain how they get radicalized. There is only one network in the world on the planet today that has all of the former extremists from right wing all the way to former al-Qaeda. Those voices make a difference to people.

If you look here in our own country, we haven't told the story of the Tsarnaev brothers. We haven't actually explained to the communities what happened along the way. They are the most credible example of what can happen to them. So when we look at who our credible voices, they are former extremists, which are the No. 1 best credible voices, but then you have to ask questions in the community.

What is working for your youth? If they will listen. Who has value in your community? Then, to your second point, what do you do with that information? So you have identified these credible

voices, so what? If the American Government takes these people and puts them on a pedestal, and says, "Go, go listen to them," it is not going to do anything. You know that and I know that. But if you go to the communities and you say: Wow, okay, these are the credible voices—how would we use them? What would make sense for your community? They often have really great ideas on-line and off-line to use the voices and the experience of these credible voices. What they don't have is the money to jump-start these initiatives to go forward, and we don't have the things that are already existing now to scale up massively. That is where the question about granting and money comes in. Some of that is American Government money, let's say, but a lot of it has to be outside of Government money, and we have failed in our country to make the case to Americans, in general the most philanthropic group of any country in the world, that extremism is your problem too, and you can actually help deal with this. The way we looked at HIV/AIDS, the way we looked at other global threats, philanthropic money can make a difference on the ground to Americans themselves.

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Hughes, just to follow up. When you went to Denver and spoke to those parents, if those parents had identified their children before they got on that plane, what could we do to help them? What intervention works before those three young girls get on that plane?

Mr. HUGHES. Sure. So there is no systematic intervention program in the United States. You have pockets of things. When you look at something like Montgomery County, Maryland, has a small program there. There are other organizations that have booklets and kinds of things that look at this, but no systematic way.

So if I am a parent that is worried about my kid, my only option is to do nothing or, you know, call as many people as I possibly can until I get somebody that is going to understand this thing. I don't think it is tenable to ask parents to either do nothing or have their kids spend 15 years in jail.

I think there is a way to figure out the middle area. You bring social workers. You bring mental health professionals because a lot of these kids have mental health issues. You bring trusted mentors, soccer coaches, things like that. Religious leaders if you need to, but maybe you don't.

You set up a system with checks and balances that understand there is Privacy Act concerns on this. There is legal liability on this. You know, if a kid, if you are concerned about it, are you legally liable to tell law enforcement about this? These are difficult issues to tackle, and we haven't had that conversation. So, in light of that, we are either doing nothing or arresting. I don't think that is an acceptable answer.

Mr. DONOVAN. I yield back my time, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCaul. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to our witnesses today. Mr. Chairman, as you know, I have been a Member of this committee since its inception after we created it in the Congress after the 9/11 incident. I am very troubled today by several things that this committee is doing.

I think it is great that we are having a hearing on this issue, but I do have a problem with the fact that at 11, which, of course, we

have now gone through this, and I am assume that we are probably going to continue and do the mark-up on H.R. 2899, that we would have a hearing, the only hearing on it, really, to go right into a mark-up. From a procedural standpoint, I think that is, as has been noted by other Members, makes it very difficult for Members to really get a good feel for where we should be.

Chairman McCaul. Will the gentlelady—

Ms. SANCHEZ. I am going to have several points.

Chairman McCaul. Well, that is incorrect. We had a full committee hearing in February on this issue countering violent extremism. It has come up at multiple hearings.

I yield back.

Ms. SANCHEZ. I am told that it was a threat, as I recall.

Chairman McCaul. That hearing notice itself, countering violent extremism.

Ms. SANCHEZ. But the witnesses were about threats. Anyway, Mr. Chairman, please.

Chairman McCaul. I am correcting you.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Well, we have a difference of opinion.

Second, you said earlier when I asked you about where the Department was with respect to supporting 2899, and I asked you specifically, are they for that bill? Are they supportive of that bill, or are they just supportive about obviously, trying to get to this terrorism, whether it is international or domestic? With all due respect, Mr. Chairman, you said it was with respect to the bill. I am looking at the letter that was sent to you by Secretary Johnson where nowhere in that does he mention in any way H.R. 2899.

Third, I am always concerned when we are thinking about making new bureaucracy, especially in a Department where we have some of the lowest morale, where we have had issues with respect to headquarters and where everybody is in different places with a whole array of having put 22 agencies into one Department at the start and now creating more agencies and more pieces of the bureaucracy. I didn't vote for the Homeland Security creation Department bill, but here we go adding on to the whole problem.

By the way, in the letter from the Secretary, he mentions that research on this is done in the Science and Technology Directorate; engagement is done by the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties; and the Office of Infrastructure Protection within the National Protection and Programs Directorate; threat analysis is done by the Office of Intelligence and Analysis; training for Federal, State, local, Tribal, and territorial law enforcement by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center; grant support by the Federal Interagency Management Agency. I mean, he lists all of the different types of pieces within the existing framework that are actually working on this.

Last, let me tell you that I have a problem with a bill like 2899 when it goes after a particular group. The reason I say this is, remember, that I come from the district where the FBI put in undercover agents to go into our mosques and infiltrate our Muslim youth in my district and initiate and tried to entrap, in a sense, these youth to do terrorism or to radicalize. Guess what? We caught it. We caught it. The interesting thing was that my imams, my people heading those mosques, when they found out that this

was going on with their youth, actually turned in the perpetrators of doing this to the FBI, unknowingly turning in the people the FBI had put in those mosques.

So I do have a problem when we are singling out just one group. Chairman McCaul. Will the gentlelady point out in the bill where it singles out a single group?

Ms. SANCHEZ. You know, we can—

Chairman McCaul. Because that doesn't exist. It says all forms of extremism. It does not point out a specific group.

Ms. SANCHEZ. You know, Mr. Chairman, if we are going to mark up the bill—

Chairman McCaul. If you are going to make an allegation, be correct in your allegation.

Ms. SANCHEZ. If we are going to mark up the bill, I will have a lot to say during the mark-up.

Chairman McCaul. We are not in the bill.

Ms. SANCHEZ. When we get to that bill—

Chairman McCaul. These attacks, I have to respond. Be correct in your allegations.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Chairman, when we are at the mark-up, I will definitely talk about where and how that happens because I will have several discussions on that.

Anyway—and I yield back. I just wanted to voice my concerns with respect to not having a process, I think, that is—with all due respect, Mr. Chairman, because you and I have worked on many things before. I just find it rushed from my perspective.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman McCaul. I do have to respond briefly.

We had a committee—a full committee hearing on February 11, countering violent extremism. We have had many hearings to talk about the issue. The bill says all forms of extremism. It does not single out a single group. Now, we streamline it—to your point about it being so diverse and so many different departments, that is exactly what the bill does. We streamlined it and prioritized.

Finally, in my conversations with Mr. Johnson, he expressed his general support for legislation that deals with this issue.

With that, the Chair now recognizes Ms. McSally.

Ms. MCSALLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate your leadership on this issue, and I will just comment to say, although we are hearing a lot about not wanting to rush anything today, I think the situation is urgent. I thank our witnesses for highlighting the urgency of the situation. We have certainly seen the uptick going on for the last few years and then more recently in the last 6 months.

If we continue to work at the speed of Government and bureaucracy, as we are watching this threat metastasize and grow in a very sophisticated way, then they are moving at the speed of broadband, as we said earlier, then we are going to continually be behind. So I really appreciate the testimony today and the leadership on this issue because we have to address it.

You know, we talk about the number of people that are working on it. I appreciate the discussion on resources. Previously, Government officials said there was a total of 16 people across the Government that were working on countering violent extremism, which in-

cluded 6 from DHS, plus NCTC, DOJ, and others. Recently those officials have not given us some great, and I am being sarcastic, news that the number in DHS is up to potentially 15 people, which would—I am sorry. From 6, up to 15, which would then put the number at 24, 24 total people across the Government that are focusing on this issue with 20,000 IRS agents running around to make sure you don't take an improper home office deduction.

So we know what the number—we don't know exactly what the number is, but we know what it is not, and it is not somewhere between 16 and 24. So I appreciate the testimony today to talk about that.

I know a lot of issues have been discussed already. I am uniquely wanting to hear, Ms. Pandith, from your perspective as a woman. You said you have been to 80 countries addressing this issue. I have been deployed to many Middle Eastern countries, many predominantly Muslim countries myself in the military. I am interested to see, especially as a woman, especially when you are dealing with some of this fundamentalist views of the role of women and the challenges that we have there, just if you have had any challenges, even with access and how you have been treated as you have been doing this research as a woman.

I also am interested specifically about whether we need to engage differently with girls and young women being recruited versus men? It has been noted that of the 600 or so Western girls that have traveled to be, you know, recruited to Iraq and Syria, only 2 have made it out, where other reports show that up to 30 percent of the male foreign fighters are actually flowing out. So, you know, while men may think they are signing up to fight, women are signing up to be raped and sexual slavery. So is there a different element of how we are going to address this related to the recruitment of girls versus boys?

Ms. PANDITH. So thank you for the question. It is a very personal one, but I will answer it for you. A lot of people asked me when I was special representative, why did the United States Government pick a female, a Muslim, an American to do this job? I feel very honored to have had the chance to serve my country in this way, and it was a remarkable experience. Obviously, traveling to 80 countries, you see a lot, and my life will never be the same. Again, I will never see the world this way again.

But on your specific question about being a woman, I tell you what, as a senior Government American official, I was given access anywhere I needed. But I got to do something that a man couldn't do. I was able to go into very conservative environments with women and talk with them candidly about what is taking place. I would argue that had a man been in this job when I was doing what I was doing, they could not have had the access.

Ms. MCSALLY. But were you also able to talk to the men?

Ms. PANDITH. Yes.

Ms. MCSALLY. Okay.

Ms. PANDITH. There was no issue. I mean, of course, as you well know, there are certain countries in the world in which there are cultural components. I couldn't always shake the hands of the people that I was dealing with. But everybody was interested in making sure that they heard—that the American Government heard

what they were experiencing. They wanted to make sure that I could take that back to the Secretary of State, and I was able to do that.

There was never a case—I do remember I was in Sudan at one point, and there was a university visit I was going to go to. The men and women were going to be in two different rooms, and they didn't want to do this. But because I came in, they allowed both boys and girls to come together. The Embassy was very, very surprised; how did this happen? But there are more opportunities like that that did happen that afforded me the opportunity—the chance to actually see things in a new way.

I do want to talk to you about the girls and the women and the radicalization and sort-of what they are signing up for. I spoke to someone earlier today, Mr. Keating, about this effort on how women get radicalized and what particularly is happening there. There is far more work to be done, not just about the research. Seamus and I agreed. We have done a lot of the work. We do know a lot after 14 years. We don't know enough about what is happening with the females. You are seeing younger and younger girls interested in going to Syria and, in fact, you know, radicalizing in different ways, which means that the way in which the bad guys are luring those kids in on-line and off-line is very specific. So we do need to do more around that and understand those counternarratives.

The final point I will say is this: We don't have enough female voices globally that can talk to girls about what it is that is happening. We are hearing the human rights groups speak about the rape, speak about using their wombs as weapons of mass destruction, frankly. You are hearing all these conversations in ISIS land about what this means for girls, but we haven't been able to move those narratives to a place where young girls are hearing it and makes a difference for them, and we have to do more.

Ms. MCSALLY. Great. Thank you.

My time has expired. I yield back.

Chairman McCaul. I thank the gentlelady.

The Chair now recognizes Miss Rice.

Miss RICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Hughes, I want to go back to something that was raised by my colleague, Mr. Donovan, in terms of what happened in Denver and your going there to do that community awareness briefing.

You know, Mr. Donovan asked you about those people who are recognizing in their children a radicalization process, and to whom do they go to get help? My concern is the parents who are not as in tune with their kids and are totally missing the signs, and they truly are the first line of defense. These community awareness briefings, the one you did in Denver obviously came after the fact. I am sure it was well-attended because all of a sudden, people are going: Oh, my God, this could be my kid.

But how do you get—Dan and I have tried to do—you know, we do community briefings like this, I can't tell you on the subject—and 5 or 6 people will show up because it hasn't affected them yet personally. So how do we, as part of the CVE effort, how do we proactively get people—and Ms. Pandith—I have a second question for you, but you were mentioning this as well. How do you get a

community involved to believe that it could be your child or your loved one or your friend or your neighbor?

Mr. HUGHES. Stories. Stories matter. I have done about 2 dozen community awareness briefings around mid-level to large cities around the country. I used to do it, and it was just attack statistics. So X number of plots of attack military bases and X number of cases involve men and things like that. People's eyes would glaze over, and no one would listen to me. When I started relating this back into a human aspect of it, the first American suicide bomber in Syria was a guy named Mo at some point in Tampa whose mother helped him get his GED at the kitchen table every night. Fast forward a year later, he is blowing himself up and killed 19 soldiers in Syria. When you make it a human story, people start listening, and you have to make it relatable.

They may not think that it is going to be their kid, but they may think it might be their neighbor's kid, something like that. You have to figure out a way to make people understand that there is an ownership here.

In terms of how do you get people in the room, it really comes down to trust. So if I wanted to go to Pittsburgh, but I had no contacts in there, I would call, you know, my community friends in Sacramento, who would then call their community friends in Houston, who would then call Pittsburgh, they would vouch for me. I would go out, and there would be 10 people there, but I would pass the test. The next time I would go, there would be 100 people because everyone has said: Okay, this Government guy, he gets it. He is not going to vilify the community on these issues. He is going to talk in a very nuanced way about the threat and ways that Government and communities can partner on that. Because if you don't do that, you have lost your partners in that.

Miss RICE. Thank you, Mr. Hughes.

Ms. Pandith, I just have to say that I, as my colleague, Mrs. Torres, saw you earlier—actually, late last year in Boston, I am sure I speak for—I hope I speak for everyone on this committee, massively impressed with you. I think you are a voice that has been loud but unheard by most people in this country.

You said that we know—you said in your written testimony that we know exactly what needs to be done to counter violent extremism. My question to you is: Will another level of bureaucracy help do that? You said one of the biggest mistakes is not—well, going to communities as the credible voices. But you said one of the biggest mistakes is not funding the local groups that are within the communities with either Governmental money or philanthropic money. But you also give a laundry list of things that you say we can do. So how do we implement it? How do we say finally say, yes, you are heard. Someone who has traveled, as Ms. McSally pointed out, to 80 countries, you have such a wealth of knowledge about exactly what needs to be done. How do we implement that?

Ms. PANDITH. That is very kind of you, and I appreciate your words. I have really great—we have all worked together. There are many of us who have understood from the grass roots—

Miss RICE. I wasn't just pointing out Ms. Pandith because she is a woman.

No offense to you.

Ms. PANDITH. Really great stuff. We did a briefing in Boston. But what I was going to say, it is not rocket science. That is what I was trying to say in my written testimony. I think right after 9/11, we were alarmed, and we didn't know what to do, and we were sort of grasping at different things. But this idea of ideology began to take some form. We called it the war of ideas at that time. What we did is we pulled back from that, and we weren't creative. So we were going at things from a very, as you said, a bureaucratic way, and it was really stovepiped, people weren't talking to each other.

You asked a critical question: If you do something in Government, where you build a bigger bureaucracy, will it not allow the creative juices to flow? That is key. I think you can do it right. I actually believe very strongly that because we haven't had the kind of leadership in Government where there is one-stop shop, really, where does the buck stop? Who is accountable to Congress? How do we look at this? It has actually become really complicated to do this.

So in terms of malleability, the things that we can do on the ground with money that is not necessarily U.S. Government tainted money, how do you actually do it? I think that those partnerships that we are building through both trust and ingenuity means that we have to open up the gates a little bit more.

We hear a lot about letting a thousand flowers bloom. You hear that from people, but at the end of the day, people keep bugging me: Well, so can you prove that if you did that for 6 months, you are going to see change? One of the things that Hillary Clinton said to me when I was special representative is, I know everything isn't going to bloom, but I want you to try. That is what our embassies were able to do. We need to flip this. We need our embassies to be able to know that they can try experimentally a lot of different things on the ground, and we need to give them money to be creative and do it. In that way, we can partner in new ways; we can seed new things; and you are going to see changes.

The bad guys are moving unbelievably fast, and Government goes unbelievably slowly. So you need that kind of—that gear that can move a little bit fast in a very, very nimble way, as the gentleman was talking about earlier. It is possible. We have seen small-scale answers to this. The problem is everything hasn't been hyper-charged to see what it would be like to have a momentum consistently 24/7 in that way.

Miss RICE. Well, I couldn't agree with you more. I mean, the other side is very hyper-charged, and we see how effective they have been. We have been woefully lacking in counteracting that. Thank you all very much.

I yield back my time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCaul. The Chair recognizes Mr. Carter.

Mr. CARTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have got—I am going to do this a little bit different from the way I normally do it. I am going to actually give you the opportunity, Ms. Pandith and Mr. Hughes, to talk and to respond.

I have got just a couple of questions, first of all.

Mr. Hughes, following up on my colleagues' questions about Denver, I am still concerned about that because it seems like it is after the fact. We got lucky there. Wouldn't you agree?

Mr. HUGHES. Yes.

Mr. CARTER. So why aren't we doing more of that now? Why is it that we were there after the fact, after they had already been on the plane, and after we got them back? I mean, that seems like the logical thing of what we should be doing.

Mr. HUGHES. There is an easy answer to that. Like the gentlewoman said, there is a handful of people in the Federal Government working on CVE, and there is a shoestring budget without a shoe or a string. You literally couldn't be able to cover the number of places you want to go to, which is why the White House did a pilot program, which they did trial-and-error, and they have done enough error and enough trial to make sure what makes sense in the next type of wave on it.

Mr. CARTER. Before I get to Ms. Pandith, I want to ask you one more thing. It is my understanding that specifically, with one of the many violent groups that we have out there, when we talk about ISIS, that one of the things that we have been doing to counteract them as far as the social media is concerned is we have had kind of a tit-for-tat approach with the tweets. Is that working?

Mr. HUGHES. I would defer to my colleague from the State Department on the international side. On the domestic side, I think there is a lot more we can be doing. So, right now, you have a State Department CSCC program that is doing kind of "think again, turn away" counternarrative programs. They have had their ebbs and flows on success on that.

On the domestic context, when we talk about Americans who are watching the stuff on-line, there is at least two things the U.S. Government can do tomorrow to figure this out. First thing is they need to give community partners the left and right latitude of what they can do on-line. So if you are an imam from Pittsburgh, and you want to do countermessaging on-line to a bunch of kids on ISIS, you are not going to because you are terrified you are going to end up on a watch list. So we need to tell them what the right and left latitudes are, what is acceptable to do on-line that you won't run against your local FBI office. That is the first kind-of easy thing you can do, a 2- to 3-page type of legal guidance from the community on that.

The second thing we can do, and Farah will talk about this, I think, is about that convening power. The White House, departments and agencies have an amazing ability to bring people together. So you can bring social media providers with those credible voices that Farah talked about and hope that there is something good to come out of this. So credible voices know what the message is; social media knows how to get the message out.

I was in Sacramento 8 months ago, and an imam, after we talked for a while, he raised his hand and said: Seamus, I am going to counter ISIL messaging.

I said: That is great. How are you going to do it?

He goes: I am going to hold a phone, and I am going to record a video and I am going to explain to them why they are wrong.

I said: That is great, sir. I really appreciate that you are interested on this issue, but no one is going to watch it. No one is going to watch you with your video camera there.

But if I can connect you with social media providers who know how to use the space, who know how to connect your video with—that if type in “Anwar al-Awlaki,” you are going to get that video that pops up there. There are small little pockets of things that we could do tomorrow to solve this problem that wouldn’t cost a dime.

Mr. CARTER. That is exactly what I am looking for because all I have heard today is: We need to throw more money on it.

I am telling you, I am not going to be in favor of that unless I see results.

Ms. Pandith, you plan to be—to travel to 80 different countries. I am so impressed. I have been to two myself. That is one too many because I like the one that I have spent most of this time in. Nevertheless, I want to hear in the minute and 10 seconds left that I have here, which for a committee like this, that is an eternity, but nevertheless, I want to hear specific, specific succinct programs that you have experienced overseas that you feel like could work here.

Ms. PANDITH. So I am going to be very biased and tell you that we have seeded several programs at the Department of State that have promise. When I left the Department of State, I gave all my programs to outside entities so that they could bloom. One of them is at the U.S. Institute of Peace. It is called Generation Change. It has 30 chapters around the world of more than 600 young Muslims under the age of 30 who want to push back against extremist ideology. Why aren’t we scaling that up?

Another program that we seeded is called Viral Peace. It is teaching young kids on-line how to push back in their own voices and in their own ways. It is what Seamus said: You can’t do it in a very hard way. You need to do it from peer to peer. It has to be attractive to them. It needs to make sense. So Viral Peace is a program that learns how—that teaches kids how to push back on-line. It is now living at Harvard University. I could go on, sir.

There are things that we seeded in the United States Government with U.S. taxpayer dollars that are living outside of Government right now that can be scaled up.

On the question you asked about efforts in other parts of the world, there are hotlines for parents that they can call to learn about things. This piece about mental health is critically important. We can copy those kinds of things here. There are narratives that have to do with culture, and the pushback against a monolith of Islam that can come back to our country as well because the bad guys want to eradicate the diversity of Islam.

Finally, I would be wrong not to say this to all of you. The ecosystem that has been growing for more—for 20 decades—20 years, 2 decades—is the ecosystem that has allowed this stuff to grow. As Americans, we have to be clear about what is happening in mosques around the world and with textbooks that are being sent by our allies to citizens all over the world that is influencing the way these young kids think. That is part of it as well, sir.

Mr. CARTER. Absolutely. Well, thank you very much for your work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this bill because I believe our intent is exactly what she is describing here.

I yield back.

Chairman McCaul. I thank the gentleman.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank our panel for the discussion today, the testimony. This has been very informative, and it is a significant challenge that we face. You know, it is hard to prove what you have prevented. But, clearly, we have to invest in these types of efforts because if we are silent, then the only message they hear is the radical ones, the ones that encourage. We have to have something on the other side to counter that, the violent extremist message. The more effective we can do that, the better off we are all going to be.

Mr. Cohen, let me start with you, and then Ms. Pandith, maybe you would want to comment as well. But in your testimony, you mentioned that the number of hate groups have been dropping in the last couple of years, and you posit that it is partly as a result of individuals moving out of groups and into cyberspace. As more and more radicalization takes place on the web, of course, it may be more difficult for DHS and other agencies to engage with communities in a traditional manner, what advice do you give the administration on countering radicalization on-line, particularly among communities with no desire to engage with Government at all?

Mr. COHEN. Well, I think it is very important for the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, to monitor the chatter that is on the net, not just simply the chatter that comes from Muslim extremists, but really from other forms of extremism. I think it is important to train law enforcement officers and so they understand the nature of those threats.

I am a little skeptical about the ability to put in kind-of counter-narratives on-line aimed at non-jihadi or non-Islamic domestic extremists. I think they are kind of a counterculture. I think Ms. Pandith is right, sometimes hearing from former extremists will help them. I do think that it is a larger problem, again, with our educational programs, our churches. I think there is a tremendous backlash that is going on in this country to our changing demographics. Going through—we are going through big changes, and a lot of people are, you know, reacting to that. I think in the long run, the answers are, you know, going to be found in our churches and in our schools, quite frankly.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you.

Mr. HUGHES. I would just jump in. I interviewed a kid, a 22-year-old kid, from Virginia named Zack Chester, who is currently spending 25 years at Supermax for trying to join a terrorist group, al-Shabaab, in Somalia. I said Zack, normal kid, nice family, good upbringing.

I asked him, I said: Zack, how did you get here? How did you become radicalized? Did someone try to pull you out of it?

His quote was something along the lines of: You know, one person briefly pulled me away, but the pull of the internet was too strong.

So he had this echo chamber, right. He had people telling him, what you are thinking is right, what you're thinking is right, what you're thinking is right, and nobody else was coming in to throw in another view. You walked yourself off to only agree with people that agree with you. So I think we need to figure out a way to kind-of pierce that circle, or we are going to have more kids like Zack Chester.

Ms. PANDITH. The only other thing I would say is that the greatest strength of America is the ability for us to pull coalitions together. We do that really, really well. There are very few countries in the world that are able to match our skill at doing that. So when you ask the question, what advice do we have, and how does the Government bring people together that may not want to talk with us? There are different layers of that. So when you think about the coalitions that could be built that can actually interface with communities that may not want a direct contact with the United States Government but do have trust with other parts of that community through the coalitions, it is a start, and it opens up the conversation.

Things don't happen overnight, sir, and you know that as well as I do. But what we have seen around the world and which groups and in our country too that are nervous about their own Government, that are nervous about why people are wanting to talk to them, they might be more willing to have some quiet conversations with people that they are comfortable with before they get in front of sort of a larger audience.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you.

You know, in all of your testimony, you make reference to the use of technology, both as an avenue for radicalization and a tool for countermessaging. Do you believe that current CVE efforts make adequate use of technology? How can we better leverage technology in attempting to identify and counter extremist messages?

Ms. PANDITH. Our ideas are stale. They are uneven, and Government is not equipped to keep up with the millennials that are using technology, and things are changing at a very fast pace. So when I think about sort-of the right personnel and how we do things, we were talking about the messaging center. You know, it would be ridiculous for the American Government not to try to do something. But you cannot keep up with the pace of the kind of machinery, the social media machinery, that is out there, which means that you need surrogates to be able to do this in a more real way without the seal of the United States State Department at the end of every video.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Anyone else?

Mr. HUGHES. For the domestic context, I don't think there has been much movement on social media efforts on that. You have had ebbs and flows when it comes to bringing in social media providers to help do trainings for communities that interested in this.

On the other hand, there is other ways to do technology. So that community awareness briefing right now is a PowerPoint presentation. There is no reason why it can't be an app, it can't be interactive, and things like that. We can scale up on those types of things very easily.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman McCaul. Mr. Loudermilk is recognized.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks to the panel.

I have just got a couple of real quick questions, coming in at the end of this thing.

First of all, let me say, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate you bringing this bill forward. In response to some of the criticism that I have heard just in the brief time I have been here, I have attended numerous, numerous, numerous briefings inside the SCIF, inside of this room, and inside of other rooms that I know every Member has been invited to, and quite often, there is only a handful of Members in there. Whether it was specifically about CVE, whether it was about countering terrorism, CVE became an issue that we have been dealing with since I have been in this Congress. This is nothing new. It is something that we have talked about over and over and over again. When you look at the number of arrests, the number of terrorist attacks, the number of investigations, the number of those that are traveling to join extremist organizations, this is a very dangerous time that we are taxing our law enforcement. Our counterterrorism officials are being taxed. They are doing a tremendous job. I can't believe how well a job that they are doing to protect us in the way that they have. But we are seeing more and more incidents because of the recruiting because of the extremism that we are seeing, the converging of youth. We must do something, and we must do it now. So the idea that this is all of a sudden something that has popped up with one hearing is just unbelievable.

So, my question to Ms. Pandith, Mr. Hughes, if we pass this legislation, and we start moving in this direction to actually have a viable, workable, CVE effort in this Nation, how long would it take for us to get everything up and running and actually begin to start hopefully seeing results? I know it is hard to measure this, but we have got to provide some relief to our law enforcement by stopping the radicalization process, which would take away at least the inventory of some of those who would perpetrate these.

Ms. PANDITH. So, obviously, it is super-hard to answer that question in terms of time frame. Appointing a one-stop shop in the Government to do this doesn't mean that we are turning the switch and everything is going to be okay, obviously.

But I will say to you, that it will help us to look at the full map of all the things that we have done. We have not done a mapping exercise. We have not assessed everything the United States has done on that conveyer belt toward the recruitment and how to stop it from happening. So getting eyes around that, the way you have a general looking at a physical plan in terms of a battle, we need that kind of rigor and respect in that space around the ideological piece. So how long will it take? I can't answer that question, but I know that having that kind of uniform approach, getting our ducks in a row, and making people accountable is going to go a long way to get us to where we need to be.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Without this, in your opinion, we would not get any closer to actually putting together a viable CVE effort, which is basically nonexistent at this point?

Ms. PANDITH. I think you have to have direction and a real, real strategy on what we are doing around this and understand what it is we have done, and really understand, as I said, the mapping exercise of what is it that we have done, where are the black holes, and what is it we need to do and somebody accountable for all of that—all of those pieces.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Hughes, do you have anything to add?

Mr. HUGHES. I would agree with every point that Farah made. I would also say that from the domestic context, you know, right now, we have the departments and agencies beg, borrowing, and stealing wherever they could in order to get personnel and ideas from it. You have a coalition of folks who deeply care about this issue and don't want the only example only way to solve an issue about terrorism to be the hard tactics, but it is just that small group of people that are desperately trying to do that. So we need to figure out a way to empower them to be able to have these type of conversations so we can move away from—you know, hard tactics are going to always be there, always going to be bad guys that we are going to have to do what we do on that. But there is a whole spectrum of activity before that where we could do something if given the right direction and budget.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. PANDITH. Just one other thing. One element here we haven't talked about is the forward thinking. It is not just what is happening now and that person who is looking at what we are doing right now, but understanding what the threats are going to be and how they are going to change. We haven't been able to keep up with that. So that is part of this as well.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Cohen, any reason why we shouldn't?

Mr. COHEN. Well, the only thing that I would add is the idea of a mapping, the idea of taking an inventory of our resources, it is obviously a good idea. I just think it ought to be extended to the resources that we are devoting to a non-Islamic extremism.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. But you are not opposed to what this bill and what we are trying to attempt with it?

Mr. COHEN. I am not sure I can speak to that completely. I do think it is important to hear from the Department of Homeland Security about its views about this. I think it is important to deal with the privacy concerns as well.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Okay. Thank you.

I yield back.

Chairman McCaul. Let me thank the witnesses. It has been a very healthy and informative discussion, and I appreciate your patience with some of the in-fighting, which we normally don't have on this committee, but unfortunately, today we did. But it is a very important issue. It needs to be a priority. I don't think, as Mr. Hughes says, we can afford to wait any longer, which is why we are moving forward today with this.

I just can't thank you all enough for being here. The Members may have questions in writing, and I would ask that you respond to those. The record will be open for 10 days.

Just to note for the Members, we are going to take a break now because we will be voting in about 10 minutes, and then, after the votes series, we will return for the mark-up.

Thank you again. This hearing stands adjourned.
[Whereupon, at 1:10 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

